‘THE BIBLE, WORD OF GOD’

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(last amendment March 2025)

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• A Compendium of Articles •

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We hereby offer you a collection of reflections on the theme “The Bible, Word of God”, in which successively the following aspects will be taken into consideration:

1) The theological basis of divine revelation;
2) The history of how the Bible came into being within the cultural-historical framework of the Middle East – from foetus to child;
3) The New Testament – a reliable historical document and not a later explosion of folkloric popular imaginings;
4) The writing of profane history – the early attempts at censorship in order to discredit the Christian literary tradition;
5) How ‘impossible’ pericopes can be true;
6) And, finally - in part 2 - a number of subjects are dealt with, like the way the Bible came into being, and evidence is given of the historicity of the Exodus.

This text compilation is intended as a response to attempts by theologians and historians to undermine the Bible as a reliable historical document and thus its credibility as the Word of God. It argues that the Bible is in all respects a reliable historical document. It addresses theological and historical critiques of this view by examining particular topics such as the nature of divine revelation, the accuracy of the traditional narrative of Jesus’ life, and the intricacies of the transmission of Holy Scripture. The author provides a unique perspective regarding the reliability of Holy Scripture to which purpose ancient eyewitness accounts, archaeological discoveries and interpretations of specific Biblical passages are put under the light. Furthermore, the text critiques Modernist views that question the divine inspiration of Scripture and it provides solid evidence for the traditional Christian doctrine. Book 2 starts with a discussion of the historicity of the Exodus. Finally, it touches upon Biblical chronological details and the true meaning of the creation account.

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The Theological Basis of the Divine Revelation

Painting by John James Audubon

1.1 – God's Being is Essentially Hidden

The core of Judeo-Christian tradition places God outside our universe. The universe is but one of his works. In that work, shown to us by the reality that surrounds us, we can learn to know God to a certain extent. And yet his deepest essence remains hidden from us – just as we cannot discover the inner reality of a human being by observing nothing more than his exterior. Only if a person speaks, we can learn to known him better. So it is with God: only if He communicates with us, if He deigns to do so, can we learn to know Him better. Because God as an individual is outside our Creation (that is, God remains in existence even without Creation) we can never acquire this knowledge through our own efforts alone, as is attempted in the practice of transcendental meditation, which is based on the principle of "know thyself" (γνῶθι σεαυτον). In this practice the adherents attempt to penetrate into the deepest depths of the self – to confront the human soul, for that is the deepest depth itself. While it is true that this type of meditation can provide the experience of an enlightening and of the fantastic power of God – and what power! – it cannot make us experience God Himself.[1)] St John Chrysostom, who lived in the 4th century and was renowned for his powers of oratory, formulated it as follows: "*God is rightly compared to the Sun, the most magnificent object in the universe, a magnificence surpassed only by that of the human soul, the sublime creation of God's almighty power*". This illuminated

soul is therefore not God Himself but merely one of his works of creation. The great Church teacher Peter Lombard (ca. 1100-1160) stated in his answer to the Neo-Platonists [2)] that God does not communicate the divine essence to creatures when He creates them, but He endows them with the freedom and power to act as individuals, that is to say: as secondary causes. (cf. Marcia L. Colish) This is the logical consequence of his definition of God (discussed in the beginning of his "Sentences"), whom he did not see as the Cause beyond being, but as Being itself, not as a deity with an internal hierarchy or as something that creates by emanations.[3)] Which is why the deeper knowledge of God is in principle a knowledge acquired from external divine revelation and there is no other means of acquiring such knowledge.

1.2 – The Bible: God's revelation

The Bible is God's revelation par excellence. As the second letter of Peter states (1:20-21): *"No prophecy of Scripture is suited to self-opinionated interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but (...) by the Holy Spirit."* According to Peter's first letter (1:20) the Son *"was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you."* It is interesting that in Hebrew the word for 'reveal' or 'explain' is occasionally 'bar', a word that generally means 'son'. In Deuteronomy 1:5 Moses 'explains' the Law in the meaning of 'bar'. Is not the Son the essential subject of the Law, He who is the Word and fulfilment of the Law? In Romans 10:4-5 it is written: *"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law: 'The man who does those things shall live by them.'"* The 'end of the law' in Romans 10:4 should be understood as Christ who is the purpose or fulfilment of the law, an interpretation based on the meaning of the Greek telos, a word that also appears in teleology (not theology), the theory of the goal-orientedness of apparent reality.

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1) See "L'Expérience Interdite" (The Forbidden Experience) by the Belgian priest Joseph-Marie Verlinde (Ed. St Paul, 1998), in the preface to which Bishop Léonard of Namur writes: "Hinduism and Buddhism, just as the Christian faith, cultivate the interior life in fleeing from the dispersion encountered in vanity. But whereas these sources of wisdom only lead us to the interior in order to dissolve the self in an undifferentiated Emptiness, the Christian only enters into himself in order to communicate with the internal Master who invites him to grow in tying himself to Him in love. As St Augustine stated: "Ab exterioribus ad interiora et ab interioribus ad superiora" (From the things of the exterior to the things of the interior and from the things of the interior to the superior)."

2) Nothing new under the sun. The type of Neo-Platonism I mean is a mixture of Platonic, Aristotelian and Stoic systems in combination with the Oriental and Egyptian mysteries. Further developed by Iamblichos (ca 250-325), in that form it was of major influence on the Emperor Julian the Apostate (361-63) and on the philosophy of the late Middle Ages. The statesman Michael Psellos (ca 1019-ca 1078), Professor of Philosophy at the University of Constantinople, was stripped of his function for – among other things – his Neo-platonic ideas coloured by the doctrines of Iamblichos.

3) Emanations imply a stream of dualistic generations, called ayons in the Gnosis, where at each stratum there comes into being an active and a passive part, the masculine and the feminine. God in that sense is identical to nature.

Isaiah 8:6 reads: *"For as much as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloach that go softly..."* The Midrash Rabbah interpretes this verse as pertaining to a refusal of God's Word. This is an extension of the usual interpretation that these waters represent the Messiah. One of the titles of the Messiah is Shiloh or 'the One Sent'. That is why Christians started to call the orifice of the spring itself the Virgin's Fount. This was also the opinion of Saint Jerome, who refers to John 9:7 when he comments: *"The miracle of the healing of the blind man by means of the waters of Shiloach tells us that the blinding of the Jews - of all unbelievers - yes, can only be healed by the 'teachings' of the waters of Christ."* The Talmud compares the flowing of water to the divine teachings. They descend from their place of glory to the realm of Man, but find only a quiet home with those persons who stand lowly and humbly, because there is written:

> «« Why are the words of Scripture likened unto water? Why is written in Isaiah 55:1: *"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters."* This is to instruct that just as water flows from a high place to a low place, so too are the words of the Torah (Bible). »» (Bab. Ta'anit 7a, Baba Kama 82a)

When water is in the heavens in form of clouds, it is essentially water. And as it descends in the form of rain, it is still water. When it flows in the streams it is water. It is always the same though different in form. At every stage it remains water. So it happens with the Word of God. It descends to us in a form we can understand. The Ineffable has taken on the garments of human language, so that we might hear and understand and be cleansed and prepared to ever higher glory with the washing water of the word. (Eph. 5:26) And the water does not return to the heavens in form of vapor until it is has done its work! Says the prophet!

> «« For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and do not return there, but water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth. It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. »» (Jes. 55:10-11)

It is altogether correct to say that the waters of Shiloach are the image of the doctrinal currents that bring to the souls an abundance of truth and refreshment. They stream softly, says the Word. The word softly is 'laet' in Hebrew, connected to 'laat' and 'lat', both of which mean: concealment or cover. Scripture is now covered as with a veil. The Word if often obscure and in particular the Old Testament. Yet God promised that the veil and cover will be torn away. (Is. 25:7)

1.3 – God's Acting Behaviour as Pulling Power

Whereas the significance of 'cause' is to be found in the preconditions of the beginning, the significance of 'telos' is to be found in the preconditions of the end. In that sense cause is an evolutionary pushing power and telos an evolutionary drawing power; in everyday language the pulling power refers to God's active intervention. The primary cause of creation is just as mysterious as its primary goal, so mysterious that God says of Himself: *"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning (arche) and the end (telos)."* Creation will

only be complete when the perfect correspondence to his Will as it once existed at the beginning (cause) – and has evolved ever since – meets the final correspondence to his Will (telos) – as it has always existed in the mind of God; …only complete when the *"Thy will be done"* has been accomplished …only complete once the FIAT has become universal.

What a marvellous thought, because once this FIAT has become universal, everything and all will sing praise to God. In a variation on the saying of Melker, priest of the synagogue of Bethlehem, every suffering or lamentation, or glory of God's saints – yea, every wail of human sorrow, every throe of human grief, every dying sigh, every falling bitter tear once shed – will appear to have been a type, a prophecy of the universal FIAT to which the whole of creation is heading. Then the distance will have vanished between doings then and now, now and later, and like Abraham's sacrifice merged with that of Jesus, all doings will merge, because all accomplishments and thoughts – including the evil ones – will appear to have worked to the benefit of the final purpose as it existed, as from conception, in the mind of God. Then, to his consternation, the evil genius will realize that all his scheming was in vain, for God will have managed to achieve that that evil, the extraordinary and despicable evil, a bewildering evil without name, was changed for the better. But at what a price! Oh, incomprehensible depth of God's all-surpassing LOVE. All praise and honour and glory be given to You. Every knee shall bow before your great Majesty. Yes, because God is great!

I would like to point out that the acting power of God proceeds from a power of the will.[4)] The well known entomologist Professor Rémy Chauvin formulated this eloquently in an interview with Paris Match on occasion of the publication of his new book [5)]: *"Up to the present the following remark has not been made: humankind is part of nature; thus, from the moment that humans possess something known as spirit, we may conclude that in nature something exists that we ought to call spirit. That something resembling spirit manifests itself nearly everywhere in animal behaviour (birds, fishes, insects); therefore, 'a biology of the spirit' exists, a title I have chosen for my book. When studying evolution, we get the impression that a kind of willpower has presided over it."* [6)] To this I would add: Why should we refuse the manifestation of that Will to God and declare it unscientific, unless it is a question here of a generally valid principle?

1.4 – History as a Support to our Belief

The manifestation of God's will is an active intervention in evolution – say, in the course of history. Hence it is that the study of religion as practised by Christians and Jews is to a large degree a question of studying history, which explains why the field of religion is so

4) A power of will is, by its very nature, intermittent, discretionary (contrary to causal), and extrinsic to the systematic laws of nature in the same way as a driver is not extrinsic to the car but extrinsic to the car's propulsion system. Accordingly, the validation of God's drawing power or power of will does not belong to the methodological set of instruments of the natural sciences but to the realm and methods of historical research. This also happens to be the battlefield of religious science.

5) "La Biologie de l'Esprit - l'esprit et la matière" (Biology of the Spirit – spirit and nature) by Rémy Chauvin - Éditions du Rocher, Monaco # 1985.

broad. It is of major importance for religious practice that we should be able to accept as true the historicity of Noah, of the Exodus, of Jesus, of the evolution of the Bible, and so on. Not that we would be unable to believe without historical knowledge, but history as a support to belief makes believing so much the easier. It makes the invisible God visible through his interventions. In general, God-fearing people do not need to bother their heads about the scientific details of historical investigations of Holy Writ. The certainty that the sacred accounts have a solid basis and really happened, wherever they are meant to be history, is usually enough for them. The opponents of Holy Writ detest those scientific details. It is their dearest wish to forget these histories because such details disturb their desire not to believe. They rather prefer to banish them to the realm of fairy tales or to the domain of etiological science (an a priori opinion on the natural cause of all observable facts). I forgive them heartily, for non-belief it is not always a simple matter!

1.5 – Impossible to find Proof that Jesus Existed?

The etiological way of reasoning (which I absolutely disagree with) goes roughly like this: "We have a burial place of Abraham in Machpelah, which can be visited even today. If Jesus bar Miriam had really lived and performed such surprising feats, then it would be no more than logical to have a burial place for him, a tomb with a body, where he would have been venerated from the start. The absence of Jesus' burial place gives the clearest proof that the historical Jesus never existed. An empty grave that has never been used is no proof. (It is only a question of time before the enemies of true belief find the bones of Jesus.) If a Mediterranean Jewish peasant existed with that name, that person would not resemble the mythicised Jesus of the Gospels, that were amplified in the course of time and only completed many years after his death by people who had never met him and could not be contradicted by the people who had known him, because by then they had died a natural and in some cases a violent death. The Roman emperors were deified by the people who loved them, so why not also, and according to the custom of the time, Jesus? (The reasoning would carry on:) Remarkably, there is not a single element in profane history in support of the amplified Gospels."

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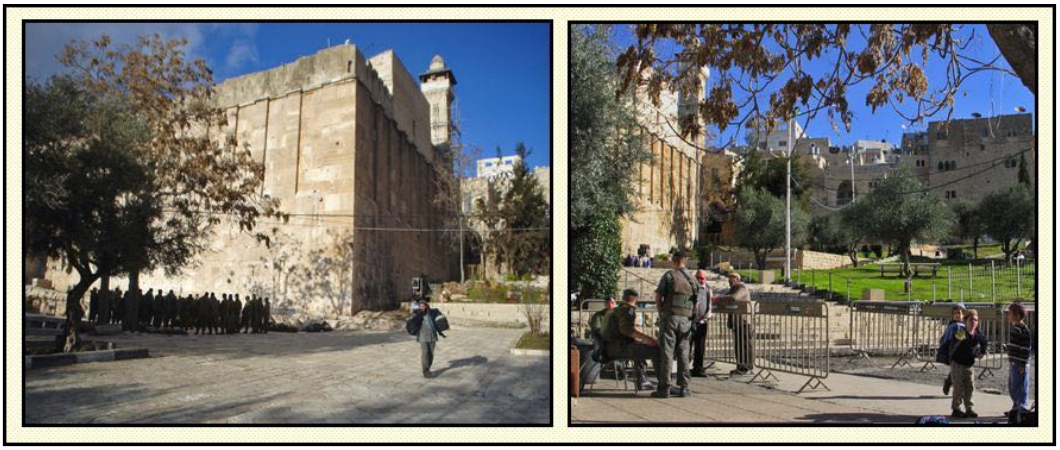
6) The universe counts 170 billion galaxies. Each galacy has on average about 25 million life bearing planets (1 in 1000 life bearing planets for 25 billion planets with conditions for liquid water results in 25 million; 1 in 1000, because the conditions for water do not mean that water exists). If 1 in 250 life bearing planets harbors self-conscious intelligent life (life is always intelligent, even the bacterium, and therefore the adjective 'self-conscious'), then we arrive at a total for the whole universe of 17 million times a billion planets with self-consious intelligent life, according to the principle that God is the God of life: life is the rule, not-life the exception. This is explained from the teleological principle: nothing is left to chance by God and it is in that sense that God, who is Life and Love, allows life to come into existence 'spontaneously' wherever life is possible. We, here on earth, have an exceptional position: of all the trillions of planets with intelligent life, it is only here that the devil has been released. He hates our exalted position, because only we, even not angels are called to be One with God (see the high-priestly prayer of John 17:11), a possibility that was lost because of the fall of Adam, but which in course of time has been restored. Because of this potential for unification our species differs from the selfconscious intelligent life on all the trillions of planets. Exceptional point: because of that capacity we can be possessed equally as well by the devil, become one with him. It is our choice: to carry Jesus in our heart or the devil!



Abraham's burial cave in Machpelah, Hebron, visited by the author in October 2007

In a lawsuit against a priest called Don Enrico Righi, the Church was accused of having invented the story of Jesus in a case of *"abuse of popular credulity"*. Father Reghi's alleged offense? Claiming that Jesus Christ had existed as an historical figure! When in February 2006 the case was dismissed, the accuser, Luigi Cascioli, went into appeal, but the case was finally closed.

During an emission of CNN on April 14 2005, in the famous television program Larry King Live, Ellen Johnson, President of the American Atheists, together with a number of prominent religious leaders discussed the theme: "What happens after we die?" Johnson positioned: *"There is not one shred of secular evidence there ever was a Jesus Christ. (…) Jesus is a compilation from other gods (…) who had the same origins, the same death as the mythological Jesus Christ."* The stunned host, after some reflection, replied: *"So you don't believe there was a Jesus Christ?"* Johnson fired back: *"There was not. It is not what 'I' believe. There is no secular evidence that JC (Jesus Christ) ever existed."*

I would point out that in typical fashion the first sentence of John Crossan's book "The Birth of Christianity" goes as follows: *"Chronologically the first pagan to mention Christians was Pliny in 111, after him Tacitus in 115 and then Suetonius after 122."* A few pages later he writes: *"I am completely convinced that Paul's thought represents 'a'* (his accentuation) *perfectly valid and very early continuation from Jesus to Christianity in a very different context from that of the historical Jesus."* The subtitle of his much acclaimed "The Historical Jesus", written earlier, is ludicrous: "The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant". With these considerations I wish to stress the importance of the historical science of theology. If the opponents of the One and Holy Church consider this kind of theology so important, so should a fortiori its proponents.

1.6 – Does God act in a discretionary manner?

At his own convenience the historical God demonstrates his Being by intervening in our environment. We should realize that the opportunity for discretionary action is not something that only pertains to God. God acts preferably through the likely, but also through

Memory of Abraham's Grave incl. cave

the unlikely and the impossible. As to the first two modes, his creatures only differ from Him by manner of degree. In fact, discretionary action is ubiquitous. For example: if a dog chooses to sit at the right-hand corner in front of a fireplace, this depends solely on its decision, because the dog could have chosen to sit on the left. I stress the term decision, which implies a course of action that is exclusively determined by the decision-maker, here the dog. The only cause for deciding to sit on the right instead of on the left resides within the decision-maker, which in effect is no cause in the classical sense of the causational concept where one event (cause) causes another (effect). If non-causal discretionary action is so universal, it would be a form of stupidity to deny the possibility – or not to expect it – that God too can act in a discretionary manner.

A decision is not an event. To call it that is definitely wrong, because a decision can only be observed by its effect, which we call behaviour. Behavioural action means that it cannot be predicted by some general law of nature. It can only be predicted to some extent through knowledge of past behaviour under a similar set of circumstances. To acquire such knowledge, the Newtonian laws of physics are of no avail. The right way to approach this problem is to make up a field report, a kind of historical account, based upon careful observation of behaviour. Whenever we deal with behaviour we enter the discipline that belongs to historical research. The methodology of this discipline is practiced by sociology, psychology, political science, war studies, ethology and theology – to name but a few. The first four deal with human behaviour. Ethology studies animal behaviour in the natural environment. Theology, on the other hand, is about God's behaviour and the interaction between humans and God, of a God who intervenes in our environment.

1.7 – The importance of knowing God's 'past'

Each discretionary action is preceded by its purpose as decided in the mind, even in case of the dog that decides to sit on the right-hand side of the hearth. Therefore, knowing history is also knowing the purpose of things. Knowing the purpose of things past is knowing the purpose of things to come. It is all about the teleology of things. The Hebrew word for sin is derived from a root meaning 'to miss (one's purpose)'. Things done, our doing, and things still to be done, are all related. One often sees the argument that a human society needs to be conscious of its past to confer to it a sense of identity, which in turn gives the necessary coherence and purpose to that society. Rarely does one see the equally important argument that we also need to be conscious of other men's past. The other man is also

(Continuation page 19)

APPENDIX 1

Nieuwsblad.be

Film-maker finds 'bones of Jesus'

27 February 2007

Controversy surrounding the 'tomb of Jesus'

A new documentary on Discovery Channel in which important Christian axioms are questioned, is causing some considerable controversy. In "The lost tomb of Jesus", to be transmitted in the United States on the 4th of March 2007, it is suggested that ten ancient stone coffins, discovered in 1980, in what is now a suburb of Jerusalem, contain the bones of Jesus, of Mary Magdalene and even of Jesus's son.

One of the core beliefs in Christian doctrine is that Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, which contradicts the opinion that the bones of Jesus could be lying around somewhere.

According to James Cameron, who produced the documentary and was earlier awarded an Oscar, there is practically no chance of the bones being those of anyone other than Jesus and his family. However Amos Kloner, an archaeologist present at the dig, states that the findings cannot be given a scientific basis and is of the opinion that the makers of the documentary are mainly after financial profit.

Film-maker finds 'Tomb of Jesus'

Many of the names on the caskets – including, according to the makers of the documentary – "Judah, son of Jesus", – are among the most common Jewish names used at that time, according to Kloner. The caskets were discovered as long ago as ten years ago.

The Greek Orthodox priest Attallah Han states that the documentary is contrary to the religious, historical and spiritual principles held by Christians. *"The historical, religious and archaeological evidence show that the place where Christ was buried is the Church of the Resurrection",* said Han. The caskets, centre of the controversy, were not actually found in the old city of Jerusalem where the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is situated.

Stephen Pfann, Biblical scholar at the University of the Holy Land in Jerusalem, says that Christians will not be convinced by the documentary. *"But skeptics, in general, would like to see something that pokes holes into the story that so many people hold dear",* said Pfann.

APPENDIX 2

From the news 09-03-2007 (Issue 286)

By Franklin ter Horst / www.franklinterhorst.nl

The so-called tomb of Jesus

During the last 2000 years the world has been able to read in God's infallible Word that Jesus died, rose from the dead and was taken up into heaven. The women (Lk. 24:9) who opened the tomb two days after his burial were upset at finding the grave empty:

"And it happened, as they were perplexed about this, that behold two men stood by them in shining garments. Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them: 'Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen!'" (Luke 24:4-6)

The Bible contains four Gospels: those of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. These books tell of the life, the preaching, the death and the resurrection of Jesus. Flavius Josephus, the Jewish historian who lived around the beginning of our era, wrote: *"About this time there lived a man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he was one who wrought surprising feats and was a teacher of such people as accept the truth gladly. He won over many Jews and many of the Greeks. He was called the Messiah. When Pilate, upon hearing him accused by men of the highest standing amongst us, had condemned him to be crucified, those who had in the first place come to love him did not give up their affection for him. On the third day he appeared to them restored to life."* He rose right through the linen shrouds. Everything was lying there, unchanged, in the form of his body (Jn. 20:7).

But the resurrection of Jesus, as described in these books, is nothing more than a fable if we are to believe 33rd-Degree Freemason, triple Oscar winner and film-maker James Cameron (with the films *Titanic* and *The Terminator* to his credit) and the originally Israeli but now Canadian documentary-maker Simcha Jacobovici. Both these gentleman are sending shockwaves around the world with the statement that there is *"scientific evidence"* that they have located the grave of Jesus of Nazareth. In a 90-minute documentary entitled "The Burial Cave of Jesus" they proclaim that Jesus did **not** rise from the dead but was buried in a cave in Talpiot in Jerusalem.

It is alleged to be about a 2000-year-old grave discovered as long ago as 1980. The gentlemen in question base their findings on years of investigations by archaeologists, historians, writing experts and DNA specialists. In the small cave experts found ten remains of caskets with – among others – the following names engraved upon them: Jesus, son of Joseph, Judah son of Jesus, twice Maria, as also Mary the mother of Jesus and finally Mary Magdalene. According to the documentary, Jesus is alleged to have been married to Mary Magdalene and they had a son called Judah. Jacobovici is of the opinion that the discovery does not need *"to change belief in Jesus"*. He says that we can most certainly speak of an ascension into heaven – though spiritual rather than physical. What an incredible fool! The media world-wide published the news on the front pages, and various international TV broadcasters also paid it extensive attention. A BBC documentary in 1966 was the first to suggest that it was the grave of Jesus and his family.

Tomb in Talpiot, Jerusalem

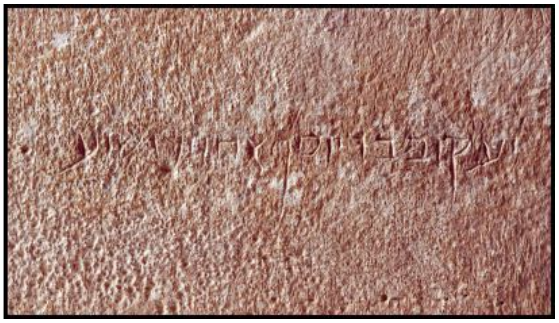
Storage place for burial caskets Beit Shemesh

Meanwhile the claim made by these two men has been the subject of serious criticism, and not just from Christians and Muslims but is also rejected by a growing band of unprejudiced scientists. The prominent Israeli archaeologist Amos Kloner, who was responsible in 1980 for the excavations in and around the tomb, rejected the film as *"nonsense"*. Kloner investigated the graves thoroughly and deciphered the inscriptions, and characterises the claims as *"a great story for a TV film",* but says that any evidence is lacking. As early as 1996 Professor Kloner published his findings in the Israeli journal Atigot: *"The names on the graves may be the same as those of the family of Jesus of Nazareth; for one thing, all the names discovered were very common among the Jews in the first centuries before and after Christ."* Kloner rejects the combination of names as a coincidence. The IAA (Israel Antiquities Authority), the Israeli authority responsible for antiquities, is keeping the caskets in its archives in Beit Shemesh and refuses to comment.

The film was shown on Discovery Channel. This channel draws millions of viewers in 170 countries and has the reputation of being reliable, scientific and non-partisan. The fact that scientists, archaeologists, statisticians and DNA specialists co-operated on the documentary will cause a great many people to believe that the bones really are those of Jesus. What Cameron and his companion have presented is nothing more than the so many-th attempt to undermine Christianity.

"And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty." (1 Cor. 15:14)

James' ossuarium

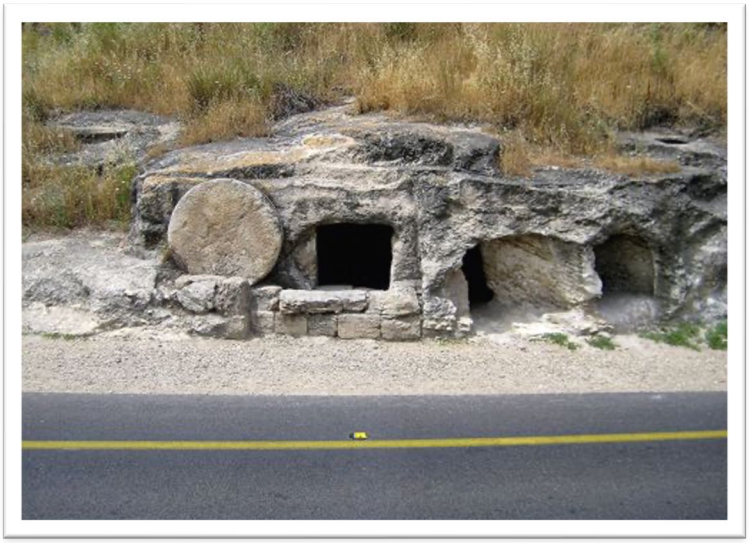


Inscription on the ossuarium

The closer the world comes to the return of Jesus the more accounts will come denying the existence of a risen Jesus. Before his return it must be made clear to the world that his death, resurrection and his future return should be regarded as a mere fairy tale. Eventually many Christians will start to see Jesus as nothing more than one of the many "Tea-

chers of the World", in the same league as Buddha, Krishna, Mohammed and others. The Antichrist will claim to be the true Saviour and the people will believe him and follow him en masse. Those preparing the way for the Antichrist will do everything in their power to ban the belief in Christ from the world.

Five years ago Discovery Channel started to promote the ossuarium (bones casket) of James, suggesting that it contained James' bones. In October 2002 an article in the journal "Biblical Archaeology Review" attracted attention when the French palaeographer André Lemaire of the Sorbonne University in Paris made it known that he had discovered a limestone ossuarium dated 63 AD bearing the Aramaic inscription: *"James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus".* It was said to be the oldest reference to the existence of Jesus. The "Israel Antiquities Authority" (IAA) examined the ossuarium and its inscription and stated on 18th June 2003 during a press conference that the ossuarium itself was real but the inscription as a whole was fake: *"The inscription is not genuine, but is written in modern characters by someone trying to imitate the ancient characters".* The casket is probably *"of Christian origin"* dating from the time after Luke and Matthew had written their Gospels. Even if the ossuarium does indeed date from the first century, there is still no proof that it refers to the Jesus of the Bible. The owner of the casket, the Israeli collector Oded Golan, states that he bought it in Jerusalem for about 200 dollars.



Tomb from Jesus' era in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem

The "Gospel of Judas" was also world news, extensively promoted by the National Geographic Society, that also financed its reconstruction and translation and trumpeted the affair round in practically all the world's major news publications. National Geographic paid around a million dollars for the restoration and the rights to publish the text and to tell the story of its discovery. The newspaper *USA Today* announced: *"Long-lost gospel of Judas recasts 'traitor'".* The Gospel of Judas is a 26-page codex placing Judas in a positive light as the one disciple who really understood Jesus, and betrayed Him only because he was instructed to do so. The document was discovered in a sandstone tomb, in the neighbourhood of the Egyptian place of El-Minya. It is written in Coptic, the language spoken and written by the so-called 'Christian' inhabitants of Egypt.

According to Irenaeus (Greek Church Father ca. 135-202 AD) this document was produced by the Egyptian-Gnostic movement of the Cainites who stated that Cain, Esau, the

Sodomites, Korah, Judas and other suspicious characters in Biblical history were actually all enlightened heroes who bravely kept alive the Gnosis*, or the knowledge of the truth. According to this movement a god named Hystera created the world and another divinity, named Sophia, who – it is said – assisted the aforementioned people. Some of those who explained this gospel stated that its discovery would contribute to a considerable positive re-evaluation of Judas, making it no longer possible for him to be seen as a traitor. He is alleged to have freed Jesus from his earthly body by giving Him up for crucifixion so that Jesus could continue his existence as a spiritual entity. Thus a ritual murder in the interests of Jesus and his followers. **In many respects the only aim of the Gospel of Judas is that of denying the Resurrection and the Return of Jesus.**

Jesus is said to have told Judas that the world was created in a way different from that stated in Genesis and that an 'evil god' named Nebro, rules the lower world of men. Judas is the 'thirteenth spirit' appointed to free Jesus from the physical body in which he was imprisoned. The Gospel of Judas celebrates Judas rather than Jesus: he goes into a 'radiant cloud'. The Gnostic Jesus in this document is not the Almighty God or Creator of the world; He did not die for the sins of men and did not rise bodily from the dead. Egypt, where the majority of such writings originate, was a breeding ground of apostasy and fanaticism in the early centuries AD. Many other strange gospels, inspired by the Devil, were written there, including the Gospel of Thomas that pretends to give details of the childhood of Jesus. Up till now something like thirty-five such gospels are known, some of them discovered in Nag Hammadi in Egypt in 1945. The novelist Dan Brown also found inspiration in these discoveries for his "Da Vinci Code". The Gnostics represented a very early movement – in fact, a perverse twisting of the truth and a direct attack on God's Word. The Gospel of Judas is nothing more than slander in a frontal attack on the person of Jesus and his followers.

There will be many more attacks, since it is in the interests of God's opponents to destroy the belief in Jesus. Satan uses lying miracles and false evidence to attain his goal. The 'lord of the strongholds' uses every weapon in his armoury to deny the resurrection of Jesus and has at his disposal a veritable army of lackeys and fools for that purpose. Over the centuries many attempts have been made but in recent years we have seen an increasing number of denials of the resurrection of Jesus. Among the elite in the West you are more credible if you doubt the Bible and the belief in the Living God of Israel or, better still, if you reject it totally. It is alleged that belief in the person of Jesus Christ has caused the world to stray. Across the centuries the resurrection of Jesus has been reasoned to be an impossibility, as a fairy tale that ended badly for Jesus. But Jesus went bravely to the altar of sacrifice. His only expectations, as He well knew, were insults and ridicule by the people, torture and scorn, but also a glorious victory as final act of his mission.

For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spat upon, and they will scourge Him and kill Him…" (Luke 18:32-33)

But Man, motivated by Satan, is spiritually blind and deaf and bothers not at all about God's Word. People simply do not wish to believe God's infallible Word and thus they pour out blasphemies over the world. Whoever obstinately, deliberately and in full knowledge and will refuses the invitation of the Gospel – that is the one who hardens his heart. He ends up by hiding the Lord away to such an extent that the greatest foolishness appears to him as his personal happiness. He is no longer capable of denying his foolishness. God selects for Himself a people that, despite all, continues to believe in Him and does not falter at every attack on belief.

"Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you." (Mt. 5:11-12)

Satan's storm is racing over the earth. This opponent is only too happy to prevent the Millennium Age from becoming a fact. But he will fail, despite his finding all kinds of willing instruments on the battlefield. These are exciting times for Bible-fast believers who, as never before, will see the fulfilment of the Biblical prophecies and can look forward with hope to the glorious return of Jesus.

* Gnosis' is from a Greek word meaning 'knowledge', knowledge that is above ordinary knowledge or belief that rests on divine inspiration. The Gnosis is a central concept of religious or philosophical movements from the late ancient world and the early centuries of Christianity. The basic assumption of the Gnosis is that we can attain a perfect and absolute form of knowledge, separate from Biblical revelation, whereby we can solve all problems relative to God, Man and the world.

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the God-Man whom we need to know and remember in order to be able to live in peace with Him, and through Him with one another. In Him the world finds its ultimate destiny. So, it is important to remember and study the past things of divine intervention. They have been written down so that we may learn, and hand them down to our children. One of God's names is "Ehje Zechor", meaning 'the Lord my memorial',[7)] a name very similar to 'ZecharYah' (Zechariah). In this way remembering becomes a religious activity, and indeed at the heart of the Christian religious activity is the rite of remembering and thus bringing to life.

1.8 – The Israelites: the first True Historians

A common trait of the people of Israel is their application to the Sacred Scrolls and the study of their vicissitudes through the passage of time – we might as well say: their application to history, 'their' history, with the object of living and surviving, remembering and passing on, a kind of peculiarity decidedly not foreign to their fugitive way of life. The orientalist Jean Koenig, professor at the University of Brussels, draws our attention to the fact that the true country of people like the ancient Israelites consists of being placed in time and in their blood-ties and is not found in the ever-changing places where their errant nomad life takes them. Yet it is precisely because of their ceaseless moving on that this kind of people has a strongly developed sense of places and of the histories linked to those places. The natural inclination of the ancient Israelites was to become historians. The simple fact that the epic tale of their wanderings and God's revelation to them was not

The unity in God of the historical development

As religion ever more disappeared from the existing order of our society, faith in the revealed truth disappeared too. Instead, the 'historical' truth and the 'reasonable' truth came to the forefront, being stripped of all transcendental truth. A radical assumption in scientific research is that in the past, thus in history, everything was primitive and inferior in comparison to what we are now – there never was question of a going backward – and that Man, starting from his humble beginnings, was able to improve himself ever more, not only in technical terms, but also as concerns morals and ways of thinking. From this perspective the comparative scientific research started to examine the Bible on its historical merits, and evaluate the validity of the religious doctrines through critical thinking that from the onset suspected these to be the result of superstition. In the 19th century this paradigmashift is supported by the intellectual and artistic elite, and in the 20th also by large segments of the general public. (...) Who wishes to describe history puts himself, according to Willem Bilderdijk (1756-1831), as it were on the judgement seat of the universe and has the obligation to submit himself to the Eternal Truth. The essence of history is, according to him, life, movement and power, which depart from moral principles. These principles are of a religious as well as legal nature. (The Bible can also be read from a religious as well as a legal point of view.) According to these two approaches he says that we can climb to the unity of each period and to the unity of the total historical development.

From: "De Missie van een Genie – De spirituele wereld van orangist Willem Bilderdijk" by Bert Engelfriet – Buijten & Schipperheijn, Amsterdam # 2010 (pp. 42, 112-13).

an invented tale but based upon real events, and because of its extraordinary nature, they felt a pressing need to entrust it to the memory of a written chronicle, which in the course of time happened to become known as the Bible (Tenach). The Israelites were the first historians proper, having clearly understood that their concept of God depended on events that once took place, the events themselves being profoundly theological. The scientific trustworthiness of the Sacred Scrolls is of the utmost, bearing in mind that the selection of events depends on the subject matter and that the events were selected because of their value in communicating the divine truths; not always in a manner easily understood, because here too: *"In the sweat of our face we shall eat our daily bread."* (Gen. 3:19)

1.9 – The Bible: Handed down from Heaven

That the Bible is the Word of God is expressed as follows by the Jews: "Torah min ha-shamayim" or: "The Bible was given from heaven", or: "the oral law – or God's thoughts – existed already before the written came into existence", a theme taken up when the first critical edition of the Vulgate was published, the so-called "Typographia Apostolica Vaticana" of 1592 – about which, unfortunately, a great deal of criticism is possible. And the Papal Bull "Æternus ille Cælestium" issued by Pope Sixtus V (1585-1590), added as foreword to that edition, could change nothing of this. There the Bible is stated to be *"true, legitimate, authentic and infallible*". (see article by Ray Comfort: "Science Confirms the Bible") The same approach was adopted by Pope St. Pius X (1903-1914) who had all clerics take an oath, the "Sacrorum antistitum", with which he was indeed able to throw up a dam against Modernism, a dam that survived until the Second Vatican Council. Only forty clerics refused to take this oath. Thanks to the intervention of the German bishops the professors of theology in Germany were granted dispensation, because of which the zinzanion (weeds) could spread undisturbed. The way in which the Modernists were able to get their own way during Vatican II is described in the excellent book "The Rhine flows into the Tiber" by Fr. Ralph M. Wiltgen S.V.D, in which a convincing description is given of the importance of the German lobby in determining the course of the Council.

The oath against Modernism imposed by Pius X covered the following subjects: that the existence of God can be discovered and proved by natural reason, that miracles and prophecies are sure signs of revelation and that the Church as institution was founded by Jesus Christ and contains a permanent treasury of belief in which dogmas are unchan-

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7) Exodus 3:14-15: "I am who I am (Ehje). (...) This is My name forever, and this is My memorial (zechor)." I also point at Psalm 114:4: "A memorial (zechor) He hath made of his wonders", by means of the Holy Script, the religious festivities and ceremonies.

geable from one generation to the next and that belief represents real approval by the intellect regarding the truths proposed from external sources to the believers. Because these truths are communicated *"from external sources"*, their seed – growing in Love – falls on good ground only there where people are prepared to accept them on faith. (Mt. 13:1-23) If we had been able to discover the truths of ourselves, it would not have been necessary for them to be proposed from outside!

The greatest contribution made by the Century of Enlightenment, which divinised reason, is that it demonstrated that no objective values can come into being through ourselves alone. This does not mean that in the Christian belief reason is taken out of the equation, since – in the final analysis – the highest seekers after knowledge are those who know how to balance subjective and objective knowledge,[8)] – and can do this according to the Psalmist's words (100:2): *"Serve the Lord with gladness, shout with joy before his countenance."* This would agree with the dictum of Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153): *"It is better to glow than to know."*

It seems appropriate to give here a quotation from 'La Bible de Jérusalem' where the stricture not to eat from the 'tree of the knowledge of good and evil' is commented on:

> «« This knowledge (of good and evil) is a privilege that God reserves to Himself and that Man will usurp through sin. It is, therefore, neither the omniscience that fallen Man does not possess, nor moral discernment, which the innocent Man already possessed and that God cannot refuse to his reasonable creature. It is rather the faculty to decide oneself what is good and evil and to act in consequence of that knowledge, a claim to moral autonomy by which Man denies his state as a creature, cf. Is. 5:20. The first sin was an attempt on God's sovereignty, a sin of pride. This (proud) revolt was expressed in concrete terms by the transgression of a rule made by God and represented by the image of the forbidden fruit. »» [9)]

This is an issue that has lost nothing of its urgency in our current socio-political system. Louis Michel, the then Belgian Foreign Minister, put into words the essence of the matter when, against the background of "The Meetings of the Third Millennium", he declared that the cornerstone of political policy in the United Europe, and thus also of the then con-

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8) This is a saying of Abu Hamid Muhammad al-Ghazzali (1058 -1111). Ghazzali was of major influence on the direction taken by Islamic thought. In the latter part of his life he became more rigid in his thinking. With that he was the last philosopher to take the path of the individual attempts at interpretation (ijtiyat). His broader opinions worked their way in Scholasticism thanks to the work of the Dominican Thomas de Vio Cajetan (1468-1534), who gained a name for himself both with Roman Catholics and Protestants thanks to his careful explanations of the Bible.

9) The original text goes: "Cette connaissance (du bien et du mal) est un privilège que Dieu se réserve et que l'homme usurpera par le péché. Ce n'est donc ni l'omniscience que l'homme déchu ne possède pas, ni le discernement moral, qu'avait déjà l'homme innocent et que Dieu ne peut pas refuser à sa créature raisonnable. C'est la faculté de décider soi-même ce qui est bien et mal et d'agir en conséquence, une revendication d'autonomie morale par laquelle l'homme renie son état de créature, cf. Is. 5:20. Le premier péché a été un attentat à la souveraineté de Dieu, une faute d'orgueil. Cette révolte (orgueilleuse) s'est exprimée concrètement par la transgression d'un précepte posé par Dieu et représenté sous l'image du fruit défendu."

ceived and later rejected European Constitution, should be based on the principle that Man is at the centre of the universe.[10)] We should therefore not be surprised that our current political course is so diametrically opposed to that which is proposed by the Ten Commandments, true constitution of human society, given by God on Mount Sinai and by Himself engraved in the stone tablets (Ex. 31:18), with the intention that He Himself would engrave them in the hearts of everyone. (Ex. 34:1; II Cor. 3:3; Heb. 8:10) If Europe were to take seriously its Christian roots, it would strive for a supranational constitution based on the Ten Commandments, touchstone of every national constitution. Surely that is not too much to ask?

1.10 – How God Reveals his Word

Indeed, the Bible is God's WORD, but this realisation says nothing about the way the prophetic witness has come down to us. God's revelation corresponds to the prevailing sociocultural requirements at each stage of religious formation. Like Pope Benedict XVI explains in "Verbum Dominum" (42):

> «« God's plan is manifested progressively and it is accomplished slowly, in successive stages and despite human resistance. God chose a people and patiently worked to guide and educate them. Revelation is suited to the cultural and moral level of distant times and thus describes facts and customs, such as cheating and trickery, and acts of violence and massacre, without explicitly denouncing the immorality of such things. This can be explained by the historical context, yet it can cause the modern reader to be taken aback, especially if he or she fails to take account of the many 'dark' deeds carried out down the centuries, and also in our own day. »»

In his sermon, "The Word of God", Reverend Lee Woofenden from Bridgewater, Massachusetts, makes the following comment (May 14, 2000):

> «« The Bible is a book that took over 1,500 years to write. Its first five books, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy were originally written down over 1,400 years before the birth of Christ. Its final book, Revelation, was written nearly 100 years after the Lord's birth. Its many books were written by at least forty different authors. Their styles include myth, history, law, poetry, story, sermon, prophecy, theology, and mystic vision. The Bible is anything but a simple book. Whole colleges of scholars can and do spend their entire careers studying its complexities and intricacies. (…) For those who are willing to consider the idea that the infinite God may bring about his purposes in far more complex ways than our simple minds can possibly imagine, it is helpful to have a deeper view of how the Bible could be written by so many authors from so many different perspectives over so many centuries, yet still be woven into a single, coherent book that is the inspired "Word of God".
>
> I believe (so says Woofenden) that, far from casting doubt on its divine origin, the fact that the Bible was written and formed over so many centuries through so many

10) Statement made by Louis Michel at the meeting in Verviers on 5th December 2001. Maurice Faure, one of the signatories of the Treaty of Rome that in 1957 set the European Common Market in motion, was one of the invitees.

> human minds, was part of God's plan in molding it (God's revelation) into a book that would provide a true link between the Creator and the people whom He created. In fact, if the Bible were written at a single time by a single author, I would have to question how a book that had such a narrow source could possibly express the vast nature of God to the highly varied human individuals and cultures that populate our earth. In writing the Bible through so many human authors over so many centuries, God ensured that it could speak to all human beings in all centuries. No matter where we may happen to be in our lives and on our spiritual journey, we will find something in the Bible that corresponds to what we are going through today, at this very moment. »»

Woofenden's observation is profoundly stated, yet the issue is even more complex. One of the main issues during the Middle Ages was the 'universalia ante', which Saint Anselmus (1033-1109), the archbishop of Canterbury, explained to mean that truth or reality consists of a series of forms in the mind of God, as the contingency of our knowledge is only a reflection of the contingency of a given and passing reality and it is therefore of secondary importance. This implies that the distinctions drawn between the meanings of the applied terms in our theological discussions on Biblical aspects throughout history are in a certain sense of no consequence, since both the Bible and which evolves from it, always concern the same indivisible truth. This comes down to the rabbinical position that the divine meaning should be newly discovered each day. It thus follows that the observation that the functions of worship evolve together with the requirements of the age neither proves nor disproves anything concerning the supposedly divine origin of revelation.[11)] The identifi-

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11) An interesting parallel as concerns the observation that the identifiable basic functions of religious practice follow the requirements of the time is to be found in the Holy Communion service, where the rituals of antiquity should not be taken as the absolute standard for today. Pope Pius XII warned in his encyclical Mediator Dei against the danger to reduce everything to antiquity. (nrs 59-64) Without question, so he stressed, the Church is a living organism, in respect also of the sacred liturgy, which has notably grown, developed, and has adapted and accommodated itself to temporal needs and circumstances, provided only that the integrity of her doctrine be safeguarded. Assuredly, it is a wise and laudable thing to return in spirit and affection to the sources of the liturgy, so he said, because the research in this field of study has contributed in no small measure towards a more thorough understanding of the significance of feast-days, ceremonies and of the meaning of the texts. But it is neither preferable to reduce everything to the earliest practices by every possible device. Thus, to cite some instance, one would be straying from the straight path were he to wish the altar restored to its primitive tableform. This way of acting bids fair to revive the exaggerated and senseless antiquarianism to which the illegal Council of Pistoia gave rise in 1786. This Council wanted one altar per church, the introduction of the Colloquial language and the abolishment of the Private Mass. Pius VI condemned this Council with the Constitution Auctorem Fidei. Pope Paul VI warned against it in his Encyclical Mysterium Fidei; it speaks for itself that the modern context is not the same as it was in the past. The introduction of new formulas and ways of saying, that nonetheless appear in the texts of the patriarchs and councils, cannot be used nowadays in a one-sided approach without due consideration for the convictions at the time with which they constituted an indivisible unity. What applies to the formulas, applies as well to the liturgical ritual. However, the basic attitude of veneration and faith in the fulfilment of the mystery of the Holy Mass must be kept alive, as always, but since the introduction of the NOM (Novus Ordo Missae) in 1969 these are in their death throes.

able basic functions, and not their subsequent importance, are the true foundations for a proper understanding of the functions that belong to ulterior religious states.[12)] For instance, when long ago God chose to intervene according to the prevailing necessities of the time, He made myths and human fantasies come true, for God is greater than our little fantasies. So it happens that Jesus' death and resurrection are a replay of the Tammuz/ Adonis myth.[13)]

1.11 – Comparative religious science

Here we are entering the field of comparative religious science. Cyrus Herzl Gordon, author of studies like "The Common Background of Greek and Hebrew Civilizations and The Bible and the Ancient Near East", the latter in collaboration with Gary Rendsburg, often manages to liken Odysseus' adventures to comparable events in the Bible.[14)] In addition to an undeniable historical core the "Iliad & Odyssey" contain religious elements that are pure myth and deeply rooted in the most ancient history of humankind. To illustrate my point, Odysseus could very well mean 'way to Zeus' or 'way to God'! Cyrus Gordon underlines the reciprocal influence between the Bible and the books of Homer. For sure, there are plenty of such comparisons to be made. Lloyd M. Graham - an obscure person and unconcealed enemy of both the Jewish and Roman Catholic Church – really goes to town. In "Deceptions and Myths of the Bible" he says:

> «« The Bible is not 'the word of god' but a steal from pagan sources. Its Eden, including Adam and Eve, were taken from the Babylonian account; its Flood and

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12) "The identifiable basic functions, and not their subsequent importance, are the true foundations for a proper understanding of the functions that belong to ulterior religious states." This sentence in my article is taken from Professor Erich Blechschmidt's book: "The Beginnings of Human Life", Heidelberg Science Library, Germany # 1977. After having devoted his entire life to the study of the stages of development of the foetus he recognises that the "organiser" of foetal development is a "Deus ex machina". He explains that the interaction of the foetus with its environment, i.e. the womb, determines its biological functions. I quote: "What has not been initiated by early growth functions cannot advance to a higher functional level in the adult. (And also:) Organs are active in correspondence with the required properties at each stage of ontogenesis. Each function, therefore, changes in the course of its further development. The morphologically identifiable basic functions, and 'not' their subsequent importance, are the true foundations for a proper understanding of the functions of the adult." How striking! This insight is extremely clarifying with regard to the development of primitive religious life as we know it from the Bible.

13) Tammuz is a Sumerian god (and later Syro-Phoenician) of five millennia ago and Adonis a Greek god of two and half millennia ago. Formerly the generally accepted explanation of the myth of death and resurrection was that it symbolised the dying and re-blossoming of nature. But it is now accepted that Tammuz and Adonis belong to a large company of heathen gods that die and resurrect without necessary connection to a natural phenomenon.

14) Cyrus Herzl Gordon and Gary A. Rendsburg: "The Bible and the Ancient Near East" – Norton & Co., London# 1953, three revisions in 1958, 1965 en 1997 (Quote from the 1997 edition pp. 50-51, 93, 123). The older editions were written only by Cyrus Gordon and were called in sequence: "Introduction to Old Testament Times", "The World of the Old Testament", and finally "The Ancient Near East".

> Deluge is but an epitome of some four hundred flood accounts; its Ark and Ararat have their equivalents in a score of Deluge myths; even the names of Noah's sons are copies, so also were Isaac's sacrifice, Solomon's judgment and Samson's pillar act. Moses is fashioned after the Syrian Mises; the laws after Hammurabi's code. »»

In this line of approach many have lost faith, being fully convinced that the Bible is just one of many books from the primitive past, but this conclusion does not hold if we understand that God always starts off from what is already available. My answer is that, sensibly, God keeps in touch with what is going on in his world below. If He exists, He certainly is not worldly-unwise or a slavish imitator. God's Word is not happenstance, not intended as a 'me too' that for a change was destined for a chosen people. God comes down to us to make us rise up to Him according to the progress of our inner growth and capacity for comprehension, something that is a process that as a whole and for the human race is spread over thousands of years. Gordon and Rendsburg give a fine shape to this notion in the following lines:

> «« Israel did not live in a vacuum, but rather was part and parcel of the ancient Near Eastern cultural world. For instance, the flood account in the Bible is strikingly similar to that from the 'older' Gilgamesh Epic. The relationship between the two stories points to the manner in which ancient Israel incorporated polytheistic literary traditions. The basic outline of the story is accepted, but the underlying theology is altered to conform to Israelite religion. The analogies are literary rather than spiritual. Indeed the Hebrew view is to a great extent a conscious reaction against the Canaanite milieu. But that is not the final piece, for the Bible does not confront us with a static code but rather with a historic evolution whereby religion and morals grew from humble beginnings to the loftiest heights. The miracle of Israel is that it grew and gave an ever. »»

This in no way detracts anything from the proclaimed truth that revelation was completed with the New Testament and that any addition to or deepening of that revelation is of that which was already known. It goes without saying that Cyrus Gordon, in view of his Jewish background, does not include the New Testament in his considerations, though his conclusions do accord wonderfully well with it. Yet it happened that a certain Rabbi Ignatz (Isaac) Lichtenstein (†1909) became an impassioned defender of the New Testament and its Messiah. A well known saying of him is that the New Testament is the continuation and cornerstone of the Old Testament and its inseperable complement, rising above the Old Testament like a dove above the water: *"And God said: Let there be light, and there was light."*

I would like to go a stage further by drawing a comparison with the development of a human being when first conceived, a comparison in which the Old Testament period can be seen as the genesis of the foetus until around the 120th day when all the organs are definitively formed and the body bears the external characteristics of the adult human being, that requires only further development and is no longer reformed. We could say

that humanity as a whole is now at the stage following the 120th day, typified as the late intrauterine development until birth.

1.12 – Thematic construction of the Bible

A great many exegetical parallels can be drawn between the thematic construction of the Old and New Testaments, something which, in itself, is an early indication of their divine origin. Allow me to give just one example, since the literature on this subject is over-abundant. When the Law and its prescriptions had been given to Moses in his forty-day sojourn on the mountain, the tribes went onwards united with the Ark of the Covenant in their midst. As they went forward Moses cried out in a loud voice (Num. 10:35-36): *"Rise up, O LORD! Let Your enemies be scattered, and let those who hate You flee before You. And when it rested, Moses cried: Return, O LORD! to the many thousands of Israel."* This, say the Jewish exegetes, is the most glorious episode in Israel's history, when everyone walked God's way in radiant enthusiasm. These two sentences, they say, contain a Bible within a Bible – but it was only three days' journey later that elements within the people came forward to complain and to grumble, and God avenged Himself: *"The fire of the Lord burned among them, and consumed some in the outskirts of the camp."* (Num. 11:1). Compare this with the Acts of the Apostles in which the following happened, shortly after Jesus had explained the Law and the commandments to his disciples over a forty-day period, speaking of those things relative to God's Kingdom (Acts 1:3). *"Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common."* (Acts 4:32). This one verse is also a Bible within a Bible and describes the most glorious episode in the Church (until now). But that too was of short duration, for there was certain man, named Ananias, who committed treachery. He was immediately afflicted by God's hand and fell down dead. (Acts. 5:1-5) Coincidentally the Jewish Whitsuntide (Shavuot) turns out to be the exact day of the commemoration of the handing over – from heaven – of the Sinaitic laws and prescriptions. This commemorates the start of the saga of the Covenant, as that also took root in the New Covenant in his blood. Because fifty days after his death on the Cross, during the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, God's laws were written in the tablets of their hearts of all who were gathered – yes, on that wonderful Whitsun Day when the apostles and their following were united together in prayer and fasting.[15)]

1.13 – The Exceptional Position of 'The Acts of the Apostles'

One eminent historian is the Evangelist Luke, a fact even acknowledged by the great historian Arnold Toynbee whom we cannot possibly suspect of being religiously biased. Luke is also the author of the Acts of the Apostles, which is the book of history of the early church. Referring to these Acts, Sir William Ramsay (1851 -1939) wrote in his

influential book "The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament" – probably read by Toynbee – that was published in 1914 and is now hardly noticed, unfortunately:[16)]

«« The study of Acts, chapters 13 to 21, showed to me that the book could bear the most minute scrutiny as an authority for the facts of the Ægean world, and that it was written with such judgment, skill, art, and perception of truth as to be a model of historical statement. It is marvellously concise and yet marvellously lucid. (…) The more I have studied the narrative of the Acts, and the more I have learned year after year about Græco-Roman society and thoughts and fashions, and organization in those provinces, the more I admire and the better I understand. I set out to look for truth on the borderland where Greece and Asia meet, and found it here.

You may press the words of Luke in a degree beyond any other historian's, and they stand the keenest scrutiny and the hardest treatment, provided always that the critic knows the subject and does not go beyond the limits of science and justice (…) Luke is a historian of the first rank; not merely are his statements of fact trustworthy; he is possessed of the true historic sense; he fixes his mind on the idea and plan that rules in the evolution of history; and proportions the scale of his treatment to the importance of each incident. He seizes the important and critical events and shows their true nature at greater length, while he touches lightly or omits entirely much that was valueless for his purpose. In short, this author should be placed along with the very greatest historians.

(He says in the preface:) I felt that this book might be my last will and testament, and attempted to put into it the gist of what I had learned in the struggle of life and the study of books. I describe no striking discoveries. My aim is to state certain principles that result from modern discovery, and to illustrate their bearing on the New Testament. The method is to show through the examination, word by word and phrase by phrase, of a few passages, which have been much exposed to hostile criticism, that the New Testament is unique in the compactness, the lucidity, the pregnancy and the vivid truthfulness of its expression. That is not the character of one or two only of the books that compose the Testament: it belongs in different ways to all alike, though space fails in the present work to try them all. (…)

People frequently asked how it had come about that I had been exploring in Asiatic Turkey for thirty-four years. What first led me there? What made me continue to go there? It seemed unusual that a teacher in a Scottish University should spend much of every year's vacation in Asiatic Turkey. In trying to answer the question

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15) Acts 2, that discusses the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, begins as follows: "When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place." Ajith Fernando comments about it in "The NIV Application Commentary" (ZondervanPublishingHouse # 1998): "We are not told who was included in the 'all' that were together when the Spirit descended. Some manuscripts add "the aposteles" her, but these are secondary manuscripts. The great fourth-century Bible expositor, John Chrysostom, thought that the one hundred and twenty of verse 1:15 were there (in his "Homilies on Acts" – 25), and this view is polular today."

16) "The Bearing of Recent Discovery on the Trustworthiness of the New Testament" by William Mitchell Ramsay – Hodder and Stoughton, London # 1914 (pp. 85-89, 222-23, 237). See also his book: "Was Christ born at Bethlehem? (a study on the credibility of St Luke)" # 1905.

> I came to see that it was entirely pertinent, and was prompted by a right instinct of intelligent curiosity. The answer is an integral and proper part of the book. »»

And so his in-depth study of the geography and archaeology of the Roman Empire supported in great detail the picture painted by Luke in the Acts of the Apostles, and emphasised the divine origin of Christianity.

Ramsay explains in Ch. 18 that when his book "St. Paul the Traveller and Roman Citizen" appeared twenty years earlier, it received a review at some length by a distinguished foreign scholar. The resumé of the publication, the reviewer found quite fair, that stressed that the evangelist Luke was an historian of the first rank, but then in one brief concluding sentence, this respected man undercut this notion. The verdict was, in crushing style:

> «« If Luke is a great historian, what would the author of this book make of the first three verses of Luke 2?: *"And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Cæsar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city."* »»

Do we need to understand the Bible literally?

A real event may hide an image and a parable of far greater significance than the event itself. Outside the central tenet of our faith the literal or exoteric interpretation may be secondary, even academic. I have no problem accepting an exoteric approach for every biblical aspect and never exclude it, even if it is miraculous, but my faith is not shaken if it happens to be different. Of course I do not condone the prevailing attitude to always cast doubts on the exoteric and the miraculous, which reverts to denying God outside the ordinary!! That equals blasphemy. For the believers and concerning the Bible a reverse proof is required, meaning that the exoteric and esoteric go together unless proven to the contrary. We cannot 'prove' God but we cannot 'disprove' God either; we cannot 'prove' the biblical miracles but we cannot 'disprove' them either. When we are baffled by seeming textual inconsistencies we should remain silent and concede to our limitations.

Ramsay decides: *"Nothing more was needed. This brief question was sufficient. It was at that time* – and still is, at the beginning of the 21st century – *fully admitted on all hands that the statements of fact in that passage, branded with the 'Luke-legend', are entirely unhistorical, (...) due either to blundering or to pure invention."* This was indeed a serious criticism, to which, ten years later, he gave a splendid and 'almost' definite answer in "Was Christ born at Bethlehem?" In my "Proofs of the Life and Death of Jesus" the discoveries of Ramsay are further elaborated, which departs from the assumption that Christ was born in 8 BC, knowing that a major census was indeed being taken at the time.

Remarkably, Luke the physician was a Gentile who came from Antioch of Pisidia (Syria), a fact admitted by many scientists, and also endorsed by the Roman Catholic visionary and nun Anna-Katarina Emmerick (1774-1824). In her visions she saw that he earned a living in Palestine and was always on the move; that in his way of living he was neither

Jewish nor Gentile but rather someone with an inquisitive mind like our modern scholars: she always saw him busy taking notes. This followed the general Roman practice of working with notebooks, known as ‘membranæ’ or ‘membranas’, noted in 2 Timothy 4:13, where it is usually translated as ‘parchments’, but ‘notebooks’ would not be amiss.[17)] According to blessed Anna-Katarina Emmerick, Luke had received the baptism of John but only became a follower of Jesus shortly before his death; until that time he had often interviewed his followers and entourage whenever he happened to meet them and took notes of what he heard. In the introduction to his Gospel the apostle Luke writes in the tradition of the Greeks who sought after historical truth and valued it for its own sake:

> «« Inasmuch as many have taken in hand to set in order a narrative of those things which have been fulfilled among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word delivered them to us, it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you and orderly account, most excellent friend of God, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed. »» (Luke 1:1-4)

Anna-Katharina informs us that 25 years after Christ’s Ascension (around 51 AD) Paul advised his beloved travelling companion to write an orderly gospel to counter the many inaccurate narratives that were circulating at the time, which Luke - still according to her - did independently of Mark (as Mark, Paul’s companion but even more so of Peter, did independently of him). Discrepancies between the Gospels are not evidence of inaccuracies in narration as if they are embellished memories; true events do not need to be identically described. As for the Acts, which Luke wrote in journal style, it must have happened along the way. In addition to linguistic considerations that indicate this, there is also a factor that the book seems to end abruptly after Paul’s arrival in Rome, where he was sent into captivity by the governor of Judeah in the year 61, where he was executed a few years later. The end of Acts coincides with the end of his divinely appointed mission to the Jews. After that, Paul, writing and preaching from house arrest, became an evangelist to the Gentiles, exclusively. See my article “The CHURCH, a continuation of the Synagogue”, in which the Book of Acts is discussed step by step and it quite convincingly demonstrates that Acts consists of a record of the evangelical mission to the Jews that ended in 59 AD at Paul’s capture in Jerusalem.

There is an interesting explanation by Bishop Papias of Hierapolis (ca 70 - ca 140) that proves that the way Luke kept his travel diary, as described by Anna-Katarina Emmerick, was not unusual in those early days. The Papias quote is from the respected scholar-bishop Eusebius of Caesarea (ca 260 - ca 339) in his “History of the Church”:

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17) An extremely interestingly and scientifically based description about the ways of Roman times is given in the book of Carsten Peter Thiede and Matthew d’Ancona “Eyewitness to Jesus (Amazing new manuscript evidence about the origin of the Gospels)” – Doubleday, New York/London # 1996 (see in part. ch. 6, quote p. 136). He shows amongst others that it is very probable that the sermons of Jesus were recorded ad verbatum in stenography by Luke, that was a common skill at the time.

> «« I shall not hesitate to set down for you, along with my interpretations, all things which I learnt from the elders with care and recorded with care, being well assured of their truth. For unlike most men, I feel at home not with those who have a great deal to say, but with those who teach the truth; not in those who record strange precepts, but in those who relate such precepts as were given to the Faith from the Lord and are derived from the Truth itself. Besides, if ever any man came who had been a follower of the elders, I would enquire about the sayings of the elders; what Andrew said, or Peter, or Philip, or Thomas, or James, or John or Matthew, or any other of the Lord's disciples; and what Aristion says, and John the Elder, who are disciples of the Lord. For I did not consider that things out of books would help me as much as the utterances of a living and abiding voice. »» (H.E. 3:39)

An interesting remark is to be found in "The Expectation of the Jews", probably written in the second century: *"As collateral proof to their testimony (as written down by the eye witnesses), what more authentic than the memoirs of Luke and Mark, who were the constant companions of the Apostles, and heard them rehearse over and over the wonderful story of the teachings and miracles of Jesus?"*

1.14 – Under the Romans Stenography was very Normal

Again I would like to quote Ramsay from the preface of his book as an additional element in the appreciation of the Greco-Roman frame of mind: *"A great discovery has resulted from modern investigation, as concerns the wide and familiar use of writing in Western Asia as furnishing the basis on which the Roman bureaucratic administration was able to rest. That is really a great principle; and yet how little is its importance understood!"* Jesus' words as recorded in the Bible, fit in with this practice and therefore they are no reflection of what his disciples have recollected more or less vaguealy. Regarding this aspect Carsten Thiede and Matthew d'Ancona make an interesting comment in the already mentioned "Eyewitness to Jesus" (note 17), referring to the work of E. J. Goodspeed:

> «« Among the disciples of Jesus, Levi-Matthew, the former customs official at one of the most important land-and-sea borders in Galilee, would have had a working knowledge of tachygraphy (stenography). Naturally enough, scholars have suggested that he was quite capable of taking down the long Sermon on the Mount verbatim, much as Tertius would have been ready to take down St. Paul's utterances (Rom. 16:22). Needless to say, the idea of an authentic Sermon is annoying for those New Testament critics who are convinced that St. Matthew never wrote his Gospel, and that the Sermon is a late concoction of the early Christian community, a piecemeal collection of scattered sayings rather than the summary of a real sermon by a real Jesus. But it is essential to approach the historical evidence without bias. »»

It is fully acceptable to conclude that the Gospels are the reflection of minutes that were made on wax tablets, a practice derived from the Roman custom. The Romans had slaves in their service who were specialised in writing, and they happen to be the inventors of shorthand (per syllable a sign). Already in the year 63 before Christ, shorthand was used

by the Statesman Cicero in the Roman Senate. And afterwards this art, meant to precisely record the word as it was spoken, conquered the ancient civilized world. About eighty years later, this special art ought to have been in general use in the regions where Greek was the current language, but it was also in use in Judeah for court procedures and for the administrative practice under Roman government. One should take note of Luke 1:1-4 and 1 John 1:1-4, where according to Ben van Noort the use of 'shorthand' is implied for writing, although the technical term is not mentioned there. This, Ben van Noort convincingly demonstrates in his book from 2011 "Jesus's Stenographers – the story of the Red Letters" (WestBow Press, a division of Thomas Nelson & Zondervan). The conclusion is inescapable: the Gospels are completely trustworthy and fully represent the original words of Jesus. (See also the article by Chuck-Missler: "The Bible in Shorthand" # Jan. 2001.)

The foregoing illustrates the care given to historical accuracy in the Bible, which is in no way exclusive to the writings of Luke. The whole Canon of the Bible rests on a solid foundation of facts. This accuracy is essential to the experience of our faith, which experience should also be based on rational and reasonable arguments, for otherwise we could believe anything, even the grotesque – my dictionary explains 'grotesque' as 'something conceived without reference to reality'. Let me finish with a quotation from Ramsay from the end of Chapter 18 of his book:

> «« One must remember that Christianity did not originate in a lie, and that we can and ought to demonstrate this, as well as to believe it. The account which it gives of its own origin is susceptible of being tested on the principles of historical study, and through the progress of discovery the truth of that account can be and has been in great part proved. »»

1.15 – The Sayings of Jesus, and not The Gospel of Thomas

It is important to keep in mind that the writings of the New Testament were put down at a very early stage and are the originals. But modern views pretend that they would have been an adaptation of a book that unbelieving scientists pretend to have found in the so-called Gospel of Thomas.

The 'Gospel of Thomas' has some value, but that has nothing to do with the genesis of the New Testament Gospels. I call this find the "Sayings of Jesus", the only reasonable title. These 'Sayings' are a collection of 114 sayings, like the "Pirkei Avot" (Sayings of the Fathers), that is part of the Mishna.[18)] The Pirkei consists of statements made by respected Jewish scholars, especially Hillel the Elder (ca 45 BC - ca 5 AD). Hillel summarised the essence of the Jewish faith in the well known saying: *"What you do not want to happen to you, do not do to your fellow"*. Indirectly, Jesus responds to this with a text from Leviticus 19:18, in which the essence is better stated, and a higher, if more difficult, way is shown

(Continuation page 45)

18) The Mishna, meaning 'quotation', is the reflection of the Jewish oral tradition. It was written down as from the end of the 2nd century AD and signals the start of the development of the Talmud.

APPENDIX 3A

The Trustworthy Account of Holy Scripture

Ben van Noort

Published in the Protestant Magazine “De Oogst” (the harvest) by “Tot Heil des Volks”, May 2006, year 69; an article that was expanded with considerations about the writing routine under the Old Covenant. “Tot Heil des Volks” (the salvation of the people) is an Evangelical organization that stands out for its preaching about the way to salvation in the town of Amsterdam.

The Gospels are an eyewitness account

“That which we have seen and heard, we declare to you.” (1 Joh. 1:3) In the prologue of his first letter, John describes that the apostles had fellowship with Jesus. He also bears witness for what they have done with the revelation of Jesus Christ that was entrusted to them; how they accepted and shaped the apostolic ministry. This endorses the scriptural authority of the Gospels. It also implies that what they have noted is not based on some faded memory, but the elaboration of very precise notes and eyewitness accounts.

The word ‘declare’ in verse 3 is the translation of the Greek word ‘apaggelloo’ (to give a message, report, to proclaim). This involves more than just communicating some kind of message (anaggelloo). Apaggelloo is about the reporting of messages that were received directly from a particular source. Herod, for instance, says to the wise men: *“Go and search carefully for the young Child, and when you have found Him, bring back word to me, that I may come and worship Him too.”* (Mt. 2:8) The wise men must report Herod as soon as they have found the Child, which is from the source itself. It is about gathering factual information and then transferring it directly to the recipient. Another example: *“Then those who had kept the swine fled; and they went away into the city and told everything, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men.”* (Mt. 8:33) These men too, report directly from the source, because they were eyewitnesses.

Another aspect of apaggelloo is that there are two ways of reporting: orally and in writing. In the previous example of the swineherds, an oral report was delivered. When it comes to a written report, directly from the source, it is a letter, a written document. Such a document was drawn up by the sender or dictated by him and was subsequently transferred to the addressee by a servant or slave. In 1 John 1:4 we read: *"And 'these things' we write to you that…"* This appears to be a matter of written messages that were directly derived from the source. That is important, because then it is about the spoken word of the sender, not someone else, in this case of the Lord himself. What is meant with 'these things'? Some believe that this applies to everything that follows after the introduction. But that is untenable, because John always uses the I-form in his letter and not the we-form. In other words, John is referring here with *"we write"* not to his letter that lies in front of us, but to a writing activity of the apostles, a responsibility associated with their common apostolic ministry. Verse 4 continues: *"…that your joy may be full".* Lasting joy is the result of being born again, because the Apostle Luke says: *"Rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."* (Lk. 10:20) This applies to both the deliverers of the message and those who accept it. Therefore, text variants have no real impact.

As we saw, verse 4 does not look ahead, but refers to the foregoing. Verse 3, already mentioned, reads: *"That which we have seen and heard, we declare to you."* Verse 3a and 4 form together a so-called 'parallellism', for in both cases it concerns the same thing, while 3b is an explanatory sentence in between. 'These things' from verse 4 indicates *"which we have seen and heard".* That message, it goes on, brings the hearers who accept it into communion with the Apostles and with God; greater joy is, of course, inconceivable. The conclusion that arises is that the 'apaggelloo' of verse 3 means 'written messages'. After all, verses 3a and 4 deal with the same thing: the apostolic preaching of the Gospel. In fact, John says here that the apostles have always used written documents in their preaching, in which their experiences with the Lord Jesus are recorded, even to Jesus' own Words therein.

Stenography

The apostles saw themselves as the humble slaves sent in the Roman Empire to deliver personal letters important to their lords. The Romans used slaves for all kinds of writing. In the Roman Empire, the slaves were the inventors of stenography - one letter sign per syllable. As early as 63 before Christ, stenography was used by the statesman Cicero in the Roman Senate, and since then this art, which was invented to precisely capture the spoken word, conquered the world of the day. About ninety years later, this writing art for the Greek language area was undoubtedly also commonplace in the Jewish land for Roman justice and administration. Its existence is indisputable now, and it is very clear to us that Luke 1:1-4 and 1 John 1:1-4 mention activities that imply the use of this writing art, although the technical term is not used there. It may be clear that with the insight gained from the documentation technique in use then, a completely new way of explaining the Bible comes to the fore, the so-called 'documentation-exegesis', which means that the Words that Jesus spoke, being mostly the Greek of the common man in the land of Israel, are literally recorded and as such have found their place in the Gospels as known to us.

As regards the theory about the origin of the Gospels, other points of view are also taken. We should realize that the explanation or application of a Bible passage always goes back

to such a position. In the declaration of principle of the Evangelical Alliance in the Netherlands, the point of departure is formulated with regard to the scriptural authority: *"…the divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures and, consequently, its reliability and supreme authority in all matters of faith and life; there is no error in all that she declares."* A great deal of time was invested by evangelical theologians in the study and explanation of the Holy Scriptures. However, they do not all use the same starting point and method. I believe, this has led in the evangelical world to a crumbling of the above formulated scriptural authority. This is not meant as a reproach but as a conclusion.

The period of the enlightenment

In the Middle Ages and the Reformation period, the Bible was fully adhered to as God's Revelation. In the wake of the Enlightenment, mid-eighteenth century, a general sense of life broke through of unrestrained independence and human freedom. In spite of its positive aspects, among other things for the inception of the free mission movements and for Bible research, there also have been negative repercussions. Other principles were used for the explanation of the Scriptures; they wanted to examine the Bible as a human document, from people to people, apart from dogmatic prejudices; but instead of advancing to what the texts themselves have to say, many Protestant theologians (but also Roman Catholic) departed from all sorts of presuppositions about the Bible, thereby discrediting the work of its divine author. Stated differently: "After the Bible texts were colored in with the prejudices of the enlightenment thinking, the Bible itself had been silenced."

The alienation of the Christian life of its own roots can undoubtedly be attributed to this. This was set in motion by the Modernistic theology, and it has not left the evangelical movement untouched. Because we did not succeed in the past 250 years to intellectually safeguard the reliability of Jesus' own Word, this has resulted in contradictory concepts of the interpretation of the Gospel, even in the by nature conservative evangelical movement.

The Greek historiographic method is used to explain the writing of the Gospels

Thucydides, the father of Greek historiography, had followed the method to very accurately describe the events in his "About the Peloponnesian War". The speeches and other spoken words he presented therein were not so pronounced as recorded. He was very clear about that because there were no underlying records. He solved this problem by presenting what he thought to have been said, possibly could have been, given the context of the events, what presented a real possibility, but then according to the personal insights of the scribe. The evangelical scholars F.F. Bruce and his student I. Howard Marshall followed this approach for the New Testament historical records and applied it in their review of the Book of Acts. They did not see the speeches given to us as verbal reports, and with this they challenged the canonicity. Canonicity means that the writer is God who, under his guidance and inspiration, lets others record his Words, which also appertains to such things as eyewitness accounts.

Marshall followed this line in his commentary on the Gospel of Luke: *"It is clear that the basic sayings of Jesus was modified both in the (oral) tradition and by the evangelists in order to re-express its significance for new situations."* (The Gospel of Luke - A Commentary on the Greek Text # 1978) Marshall assumes that this free rendering of the

spoken word has not resulted in any substantial changes in the original intentions of the speakers, in this case of Jesus, but that statement is unsubstantiated, is nothing more than hot air. In the Netherlands, the salvation history exegesis follows a similar pattern. This exegesis is about 'the histories of salvation' as found in the Gospels. The salvation message would by itself have fully guaranteed the reliability of the oral tradition. But that is definitely incorrect. The one does not follow from the other. According to Marshall, it can be about Lukas' memory or of others, with which the original intention would sufficiently have been guaranteed. A literal Biblical account of what was spoken does not matter then!

Not only did Bruce set the course for the reporting methodology of the Book of Acts and the Gospels. He argued in "The New Testament Documents: Are they Reliable?", from 1977, that Jesus spoke Aramaic and that it was then the language spoken in Galilee. (pp. 35-36) In this book he follows a still widely accepted opinion. Incidentally, it is not self-evident that Jesus would have spoken Aramaic. Opposite the discovery of hundreds of Greek Gospels and gospel fragments, there is not one original Aramaic fragment. The only discovered Aramean or Syrian Gospel texts are later translations of the Greek Gospels. According to the hypotheses of (1) the usual Greek practice of historiographic fantasy, (2) the salvation history thesis and (3) Aramaic as the language of preaching, it is of course true that in this way Christianity has lost the confession of faith that we possess the original Words of the Founder himself. Where is the authority of Scripture …and the authority of Jesus' Word: the divine Word of the divine Master?

This nagging question alone makes it clear that a clear answer is no longer possible with the introduction of the Greek method of writing history in the Biblical historiography, even in an evangelical context in which people like to proclaim the infallible Word of the Lord. But unfortunately that is not the end point. Younger evangelical scholars go one step further. They argue that the Gospel writers have made self-willed changes to the material used, or that inaccuracies had crept into it as a result of their public preachings in Greek – from memory, in a translation from Aramaic – that have found their way into the writing afterwards of the Gospels much later. Actually, they returned to the liberal theology from the mid-20th century that was known as Modernism.

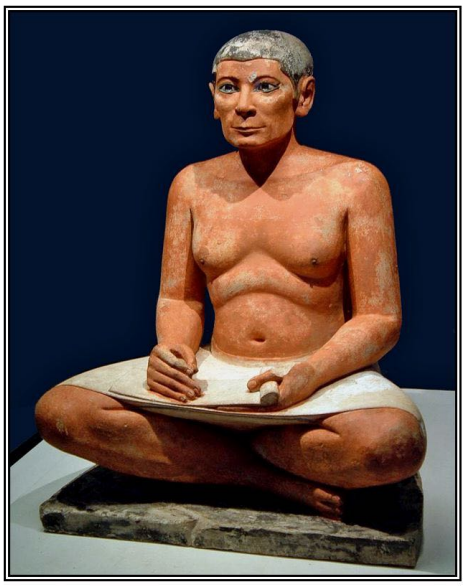
It goes without saying that the aforementioned concepts play a role in the 'documentation-exegesis'. It cannot be said more clearly: **"The Gospels are not the product of the Greek historiograpic fantasies! Jesus' Bible Words in Greek are not translations from his supposed Aramaic preaching. They are also not a reflection of what his students have picked up from their more or less vague memories. The Gospels are conscientious records from trustworthy minutes."** Jesus acted from his position as Sender. In wise policy, He has appointed writers who followed Him during his travels, so that He could later say: *"Teach the nations (based on what you have written)!"* The conclusion is inescapable: We Christians are indeed in possession of Jesus' original Words. He still exercises his authority in peace because his Word is still being fulfilled: *"Learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls; for my yoke is easy and my burden is light."* (Mt. 11:29) But He is hiding from the pride of heart who willfully conceals his Word.

The routine of taking minutes under the Old Covenant

Just as there was a technique of taking notes in Christ's time, as we have just seen, such a technique also existed under the Old Covenant, to which we now draw our attention. The

Hebrew script is extremely suitable for taking notes or shorthand. Who has ever wondered what the practical use was of skipping the vowels in ancient Hebrew? I don't know of any publications about this. It is usually accepted as folklore that the Hebrew written language has no vowels. But it remains special those missing vowels. In the first place it meant a saving in time: it was much faster to write something down. Due to the lack of vowels, 30 to 40% of the 'letters' were lost when writing. It cannot be denied that the Hebrew written language has the inherent capacity for shorthand. An additional interesting fact is that a simplified Hebrew script was used in ancient Israel, as revealed by excavations. The ancient prophetic writers, therefore, did not have to use the refined paleo-Hebrew script for the recording of the words given to them. Trained writers were able to follow the spoken words in their own writing. The question then becomes urgent: "Are there clear examples in the Old Testament of speed writing or of the activity of speed writers?"

In the first place, there are many implicit examples of shorthand in the primary prophetic task. Abraham recorded the commandments and passed them on as teachings and so did all the prophets after him. Moses communicated with God on Mount Sinai and later in the Tabernacle, where he heard God's voice sounding from above the Ark of the Covenant. (Ex. 25:22) We also read that he wrote (for instance on Mount Sinai) and that he subsequently did everything as the Lord had commanded him. The later prophets also claimed to pass on the Words of God promptly and to record them in their books. It was usually God's Spirit (the Ruach ha-Kadesh) they were involved with, who revealed the Words in their hearts, and those inspirations were then recorded by themselves or their disciples.



Speed Writing in ancient times was essential, also then

The examples show that the prophetic Word was passed on in writing and then speed writing was the condition to arrive at a credible tradition. That condition was already of great importance in ancient times, as we shall see. This representation of things is very different from what the learned theologians have always held out to us. They said: "Years after the events, God's Spirit has exactly and literally brought back into the memory of the people what had happened so that they could write it down for posterity (mechanical inspiration)." That is exegetically untenable except for the creation story. The exegesis asks, as it were, for the possibility and even requires it, that there be a written record during the speech or immediately afterwards. The inspiration of God's Spirit, which prompted the writers, is expressed through the spoken and written word. In all kinds of situations, that Spirit not only made people speak but, at the same time, made them also write. It is not just a theological luxury to take a different look at this subject. There is a real need for a change in Christian thinking in order to arrive at a viable theology, that is, a theology that takes the Word of God seriously.

The use of wax tablets, which is sometimes mentioned in the Old Testament, is one of the explicit examples of speed writing. That was the usual tool that speed writers used as an

intermediary between the spoken word and the scroll. Writing in wax went much faster than with ink on papyrus or leather. Wax tablets were ideal for speed writing. The notes in wax were usually not stored for long. The notes were worked out on papyrus without delay, after which the wax tablets were ready for use for the umpteenth time.

A number of examples of this practice can be found in the Bible itself:

In Isaiah 30:8: "*Now go, write it down on a (wax)tablet in their presence, inscribe it on a scroll, so that it might be preserved for a future time as an enduring witness."* Isaiah was instructed to write down God's Words, which he spoke to the people as a prophet. His disciples will usually have done this on wax tablets. What was said by the prophet, but also what was said by the people, had to be recorded in a book and kept for posterity.

The prophet Habakkuk is instructed (Hab. 2:2): *""Write down this message! Record it legibly on (writing) tablets, that it may be read in passing."* Habakkuk had to store his messages on writing tablets for a time and make them available to people so that they could read them with their own eyes. It is unlikely that reference is made to a notice board because the writing tablets themselves (the loechot) were the tools of the prophets. With the display of the opened wax tablets with the messages and visions given to the prophet, an urgent call naturally arose: "the Lord has spoken."

In Proverbs 3:1-3 is written: *"My child, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments. (...) Bind them around your neck, write them on the (writing) tablet of your heart."* A spiritual teacher spoke here. He advised his pupil to hang his words around his neck. Very soon he would fold his writing tablet and hang it on a belt around his neck. That is why he used the metaphor *"Bind my teaching/words around your neck",* so that you always have them with you, just like your writing materials. But that was of course insufficient. The teacher's words had to sink deeper: 'in the heart', because it is from the heart that must be lived. That is why he said afterwards: *"Write my words on the writing tablet of your heart."* The heart is like a writing tablet. This symbolism can also be found in Proverbs 7:1-3: *"My child, devote yourself to my words and store up my commands inside yourself. Keep my commands – so that you may live – and obey my instruction as your most prized possession."* There it was about the statements of a teacher that had to be engraved in the heart, because it ends with: *"Bind them on your forearm; write them on the tablet of your heart."* A wax tablet could be attached with a strap to the hand to keep a grip on the wax tablet while writing. Thus the teacher's words had to become practical (handy) in the life of his follower and to come into his heart to heartily live them.

Here follows a discussion about the prophetic inspiration in connection with speed writing. Psalm 45:1 reads: *"My heart is stirred by beautiful words. I say: I have composed this special song for the king; my tongue is as skilled as the stylus of an experienced scribe."* Here a prophet speaks to the king and uses the example of the great messianic king that Israel is waiting for. That is why he begins to express his emotion: *"My heart is*

stirred by beautiful words." He says what God's Spirit let him experience. At that moment he sees the royal writers and he starts to make something clear with that image. Just as the writer on his wax tablet only had to show what the king said, or in this case the prophet, so as a prophet he only had to show what God's Spirit revealed to him. So he exclaims: *"My tongue is as skilled as the stylus of an experienced scribe."* The writer's stylus reproduces the king's words, the prophet's tongue reflects the Words of God. That this was indeed a writer with a writing board (covered with wax) is clear from the word 'eat' for stylus – the eating away of wax while pushing the stylus.

The Septuagint talks about the Oksugrafos

They still worked that way hundreds of years later. The translators of the Septuagint, which is a famous translation of the Old Testament into Greek from around the year 200 BC, combined the two Hebrew words 'sofeer' (writer, writing) and 'mahir' (fast) into one technical Greek term: fast writing, being one concept: 'oksugrafos'. A few conclusions follow from this Greek combination in Psalm 45 in one term:

- Speed writing was a skill that already existed in the Greek-speaking world around 200 BC, or earlier.
- The application of this Greek word based on Hebrew indicates also how Greek speed writing worked then: shortening of words by omitting letters like in Hebrew.
- Based on the Septuagint translation from 200 BC, we may conclude that speed writing was a skill that also existed in the Hebrew language area – it indicates a continuity.
- Hebrew speed writing was so obvious to the Septuagint translators that they simply projected it back to the time when Psalm 45 came into being.

Nowadays the explanation of this psalm is based on the assumption that it is a skilled writer who wrote beautiful letters and that the prophet spoke gracefully in the same way. Or they want to see the reliability of the writer because he was skilled and professional. That is how reliable the word of the prophet would be! Anyway, this explanation does not adequately convey that 'mahir' carries the notion of 'speed'. The word root is 'mahar': rushing, running. This psalm is really about writing very fast. The Septuagint translators have understood that correctly.

The Ten Commandments written on 'writing plates'

A direct link between the spoken and written word is most prominent in the Ten Commandments. The tablets of stone – called the Tablets of the Covenant (Deut 9:9,11) or the Tablets of the Testimony (Ex. 31:18; 32:15) – stood and are central in Israel. For 'tablet' the usual word for writing board, 'loe'ach, is used here, plural 'loechot'. Loe'ach means plank, as with the planks used for the construction of the Tabernacle. (Ex. 38: 7) But in the context of writing it means writing board, as in the examples of Isaiah, Habakkuk, and Proverbs, we just discussed. In addition, archeology clearly shows that a writing board was not a time-bound instrument in the early antiquity of the Middle East. We can safely assume that at the time of Moses, the Israelites knew the writing board as a daily tool, as used also in Egypt, the land of their oppressors

'Tablets' is based on the King James version, which translates *"tables of the heart"* in Proverbs 3:3 and 7:3. But that seems strange now and that's why they omit 'tables' in a

modern translation like the Good News Bible and that's why it becomes: *"write them (the commandments) on your heart"*. The translators of old probably thought of the erected stones or steles in which the kings traditionally chiseled and publicly exhibited their laws so that everyone could know them. But the Ten Commandments were not displayed in public, and therefore the comparison with a stele does not hold. The keeping in the Ark of the Ten Commandments, carved in stone, corresponds well with writing boards and writing tables, or the wax tables that in later times were kept at home in a storage box. In addition, the loechot were used on both sides. (Ex. 32:15) And that is how they kept the ordinary writing tables, which were kept together in a case, like a sort of book.

Anyway, the use of the *"Tablets of the Ten Commandments"* makes it sufficiently clear what their function was. Speed writers usually did not write down their own words but reproduced what they heard. The Ten Commandments, however, were engraved in stone by God himself (God engraves in stone as easily as in wax): *"I will then give you tables of stone, the law and the commandments, which I have written that you may teach them."* (Ex. 24:12) Here we see the triad again: the command, the writing, and the teaching. When should the Ten Commandments be taught? From the moment that God spoke and the people accepted them. From that moment they were valid. Therefore, immediate recording that was meant for public instruction, and acceptance by the public who gave their trust.

Direct recording of the prophetic testimony has been at the heart of the evolution of Israel's religion and God's involvement with his people for centuries. The message for the later prophets was that God's Word is word for word, even letterexact, and always had to be kept both in stone and on parchment. Speed writing was the indispensable ingredient and the very first step to make God's Word permanent so that it might flourish in our hearts, that goes without saying, just as it was the indispensable ingredient for the disciples of Jesus, and also for the witness Luke, who followed Him closely during his journeys and preaching and noted everything diligently. In Jesus' teachings there existed also a lot of repetition, as in the teachings of the Old Covenant, as a result of which they were being engraved deeper and deeper into the hearts of the hearers, so to speak were becoming part of the self. Isn't that the intention of the Holy Scripture?

Ad finem

APPENDIX 3B

IPSISSIMA VERBA JESU

The Very Words of our Lord Jesus Himself

Ben J. E. van Noort

"Jesus's Stenographers" by Ben van Noort - Westbow Press, Illinois # 2018 (pp. 201-207).

The Biblical account of the three rich men

Matthew 19:16-30, Mark 10:17-31 and Luke 18:18-30 report that within nearly the same period, some wealthy men approached Jesus with essentially the same question: *"Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life?"* (Mt. 19:16) Strangely enough, the three conversations have the same character, yet there are irreconcilable differences. As for the similarities:

- Jesus refers to God as the one who is good ;
- Jesus answer is: *"Do the (ten) commandments and you will live."* ;
- The answer of the man is that he observed the commandments always, from his youth (Mark and Luke) ;
- Says the Word of Jesus: *"Go, sell what you possess and give to the poor."* (Mt. 19:21) ;
- The man went away sorrowful, as he had great possessions ;

- A closing conversation follows between Jesus and his disciples about riches ;
- Peter takes the lead in this conversation, with the suggestion that they have left everything to follow Jesus, and what will be their reward?

When we look at the stories of the rich men, we cannot avoid seeing the great similarities: in expressions and in content (line of reasoing), and the enclosures are strikingly identical in the same way.

The classical view is that we are dealing with three reports of one occasion. The famous and devout commentary on the Gospels by John Calvin (Harmony of the Gospels) took this position, and he has been followed until today by an army of commentators. The insolvable problem of this position is that the sayings of Jesus have been altered, comparing the conversations in Matthew, Mark and Luke. In the time of the Reformation, nobody saw this as a serious problem, as they had to deal with wars and persecutions. But now, in our time, Christianity is blamed again and again for the inconsistencies in its Sacred Scriptures. That these inconsistencies are serious will be painfully apparant from the following discussion.

The story of the 'rich young ruler' has always been a cornerstone of the theory of the oral tradition prior to the supposed much later writing down of the Gospels, for it cannot be denied that the parallel conversations are not exactly the same. Furthermore, it is impossible to explain so many discrepancies by invoking the theory of translation from Aramaic into Greek at some point in the process of oral transmission. Indeed, when we count the small differences in Greek between the three conversations in Matthew, Mark, and Luke (with regard to the supposed 'rich young ruler'), we find at least thirty small dissimilarities And in the closing conversations about richness, we find around forty slight differences. Altogether, there are about seventy dissimilarilies! But what is the ultimate conclusion of that seemingly unexplicable phenomenon?

It is a conclusion that is seldom expressed nowadays by orthodox scholars, but the renowned Ned B. Stonehouse did so, some decades earlier, in his book "Origins of the Synoptic Gospels - some basic questions" :

> «« It is obvious therefore that the evangelists are not concerned, at least not at all times, to report the 'ipsissima verba' [or very own Words] of Jesus. (...) Inasmuch as this point seems constantly to be overlooked or disregarded in the modern situation, it may be well to stress again that orthodox expositors and defenders of the infallibility of Scripture have consistently made the point that infallibility is not properly understood if it is supposed that it carries with it the implication that the words of Jesus as reported in the gospels are necessarily the ipsissima verba. What is involved rather is that the Holy Spirit guided the human authors in such a way as to insure that their records give an accurate and trustworthy impression of the Lord's teachings. »» (pp. 108-110)

It is no coincidence that Stonehouse wrote this in his commentary on 'the rich young ruler'. But what must the conclusion of a student in theology be when he reads this? Or of any nonprofessionally educated Christian? I'm sorry to say that the inevitable conclusion is that we don't possess the actual Words of the Lord in the Gospels. And that is simply unacceptable – psychologically, theologically, historically, and grammatically:

• Psychologically: In reading Stonehouse's quote, above, don't we get the desperate feeling of Mary Magdalene, who cried out: *"They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him?"*

• Theologically: What can be the significance of the Gospels when what Jesus said is questionable? As with his statement: *"Everyone then who hear these Words of mine and does them, will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock."* Are these words to build upon, then? Maybe Jesus' ideas are left, but we cannot be certain of that either. Maybe it was only the enthusiastic impulses of the apostles who put this thought into Jesus mouth, many years later. And what about that guidance of the Holy Spirit, about which Ned Stonehouse spoke? In commentaries, usually the work of the Holy Spirit is not stressed, not even mentioned. The discrepancies in the text are rather emphasized and they are explained as products of the oral transmission without any reference to the Holy Spirit, even in works that take Scripture seriously as the Word of God.

• Historically: Isn't the church based on a monomania, which is an exaggerated preoccupation with one thing? If the apostles could lay their own words on Jesus lips, they could also have invented the resurrection as a happy ending. It is IMPOSSIBLE to base one's faith on historical facts only – although the historical facts are of prime importance – and it is all the more impossible to base one's faith on a set of possible ideas. A person's belief in the God of the Bible must be based on a relationship. That is the first requirement, a conditio sine qua non. And such a relationship is based on true sayings, the precise and complete Words of Jesus. Therefore, the apostles have given us the Gospels in which more than 600x it is clearly stated: *"Jesus said"* or *"Jesus answered and said"*. The apostles knew perfectly well the value of Jesus own sayings.

• Grammatically: In chapter one of "Jesus's Stenographers", the proper grammatical evidence is given for a proper understanding of the prologues of the Gospel of Luke and of the First Letter of John, together with the statement of Hebrews 2:3-4, about Jesus' note takers. I have clearly demonstrated that the generally accepted grammatical analyses of these texts are wrong and that better ones are called for. These passages underline the riches of the Gospels. We possess, fortunately, the very own Words of Jesus Christ, the ipsissima verba!

I do not want to blame scholars [says Van Noort] who entertain different views. On the other hand, it is unacceptable to be forced, theologically, to continue with a scholarly and ecclesiastical inheritance that is not in line with grammar, nor with the true Christian inheritance of the Gospels. Therefore, let's return to the stories of the rich men and see how they form together a cornerstone for the documentation exegesis [as expounded by Ben van Noort].

It appears to be impossible to explain the three stories as descriptions of one occasion. In every single narration, the discourse between Jesus and the rich man is closed; that is, direct sequence of question and answer. That makes it impossible to combine the discourses into one great conversation. The narrative details cannot help but refer to three different events.

Matthew speaks about a young man, and in Mark and Luke, the man says that he has observed the commandments from his youth onwards (neotes is youth). In these two instances, it is supposed that the speaker is not a young man anymore hut an older man. Moreover, the rich man of Luke is 'a ruler'; that means a person in authority. In Jewish

culture, it was impossible to just inherit a position of authority; one could only acquire authority, especially in Jewish society, based on the experience of life. At the age of about forty years, one could become a ruler. Therefore, the ruler in Luke was certainly not the young man of Matthew. The ruler in Luke did not kneel in front of Jesus; he could not do that due to his social position. Therefore, the ruler in Luke is not the rich man of Mark either, who was an older man and knelt before Jesus. Undoubtedly, we are dealing with three rich men. The 'rich young ruler' never existed; he is a composite and imaginary character of three different individuals.

The imperative form: *"sell (...) and give (distribute) to the poor",* is an aorist form [like in the Lord's Prayer *"gives us our bread"*]; a principle of acting is meant and not a compelling command for an immediate and complete application. In the course of time, the rich men should sell their their possessions that they wouldn't need. That was the part they were supposed to use for the benefit of the poor. Jesus Word included going home and making a start with doing what He had asked. This has been understood in the wrong sense, as if they had to go home and immediately sell all of their belongings. If this were the case, an imperative 'present' would have been used. Jesus taught his disciples the same principle: *"Sell your possessions and give alms."* (Luke 12:33) None of the listeners arose to carry out this command immediately. John the Baptist had followed the same ethic: *"He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise."* (Luke 3:11) Phrases such as "Sell all that you have" and "Sell what you have" mean: sell what you hold and with which you do nothing [except hoard]. This interpretation is warranted because the Greek 'echoo' has two basic meanings: 'to have, to hold'. For the rich men in these stories that was a considerable amount; hearing this teaching they were deeply disappointed.

The men did not recognize this Word of Jesus as gospel - good news - but as bad news. A rich man's life at hat time was not simple - no insurance, no police with modern criminal investigation departments. The rich had to organize nearly the complete protection of their properties against unreliable slaves, corrupt servants, money-grubbing tax collectors, and plundering gangs. Nobody would lift a finger when a rich man was robbed. They had to set up a small army of 'loyal' followers, who were reliable as long as they got paid. The relationships of the rich were nearly all monetary relationships. Jesus offered personal relationships if they gave up properties, and then relationships of only monetary nature would come to an end. Only caring for their daily needs would remain; that was Jesus liberation for them. They could take as much as they wanted to count for their daily needs, as Peter said to Ananias: *"And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal?"* (Acts 5:4)

The fact that the rich men came to Jesus at nearly the same time and at nearly the same place, indicates that they had had contact with each other (living pattern). They were living in the same region and belonged to the same social circle. Of course they had met each other and had discussed the Rabbi of Nazareth with his message about eternal life. That was an interesting point. Of course they knew that being a Jew did not guarantee eternal life. They knew enough co-nationals who were definitely unreliable. But what would be the condition for receiving eternal life? It couldn't be money; if so, they all possessed that life already. No, there had to be something else, but what? It was not difficult for them to agree on this point, and there the conversation came to an end; they dared not admit to each other that it was a serious question for them. If they had done so, they would have come to Jesus 'together'. Their contact was not so open that they dared to share their

deepest secrets; it was certainly part of their problem that they were unable to handle true personal relationships. However, their discussion revealed their basic need, and each one decided independently to arrange a meeting with Jesus. By questioning Him, it was impossible to become socially incorrect. However, the answers they got were very disappointing to them. Maybe one or some followed Jesus instruction later, after mature consideration, and experienced the blessing of it.

After each meeting with a rich man, Jesus started to teach about wealth and faith in God. Peter asked only once: *"Lo, we have left everything and followed you. What then shall we have?"* (Mt. l9:27) Then Jesus started to talk about their rewards (twelve thrones for his disciples). In Mark and Luke, Peter only stated: *"We have left everything and followed you."* Peter already knew the answer and it was not necessary to ask about that again. He could confine himself to the statement only, to make it possible for Jesus to accomplish his teaching about the rewards of the Gospel. Maybe Peter liked to hear that, or was concerned that others who were not present then, during other occasions should hear about it.

Matthew has the largest report. His teaching report deals with the issue 'riches and belief in God' and contains the specific prophecy of the twelve thrones that the disciples were to inherit. Luke's public record is the smallest one. It doesn't speak about the thrones or about the astonishment of the disciples. These things were not appropriate for the public at the time of the first reports being written. It was probably not only the twelve who were listening in Luke's story, as Jesus spoke to *"those who heard it"* and not specifically to the twelve, as in Matthew and in Mark. Mark's report became the remnant record, as the remark of the twelve thrones for the closest disciples is lacking in it.

Regarding our attitude in commercial transactions, activities that are essential for our society, I would like to finisch with some comments by Hubert Luns:

The Lord declares through his prophet: *"I will make justice the measuring stick and a fair verdict to the plummet"*. (Is. 28:17) Abraham was chosen to teach his posterity *"to do charity and judgement"* (Gen. 18:19), because we all make judgments all the time and it is through judgement that charity should be exercised. In the psalms it is said that *"God desires charity and a proper verdict"* (Ps. 33:5), *"which is even more so acceptable than sacrifice."* (Prov. 21:3) His throne is founded upon them, for it is written in Psalm 97:2: *"Charity and a proper verdict (also in one's commercial dealings) are the foundation of his throne."* When the Queen of Sheba met King Solomon, she exclaimed: *"Blessed be the Lord your God who delighted in you to set you on the throne of Israel, because the Lord loves Israel forever. Therefore He made you a king in order to act justly and fairly."* (1 Kings 10:9) It reverts to the concept of the Hebrew 'ona'ah' mentioned in Leviticus 25:17, which essentially refers to the proper balance of giving and taking in which I treat myself and my commercial counterpart with the same yardstick, as it says: *"Do not take advantage of each other, but fear your God. I am the Lord your God."* As stated in Proverbs 20:10: *"Differing weights and differing measures, both of them are abominable to the Lord."*

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to Matthew 22:39: "*Love thy neighbour as thyself*".[19] To call the Sayings of Jesus a Gospel is an affront to faith and truth, as if the Canonical Gospels (except John) are pure invention by means of an amplification of an earlier source (called Q from the German Quelle) such as this one, which Professor Harold Bloom, co-author of "The Book of J" and author of "The American Religion", believes was put down in writing by Jesus' twin brother called Judas Thomas – literally! – but in the book of Thomas, first translated in English in 1959, is written (138:4-10): *"Jesus says: it is said (i.e. other people say) you are my twin and my true friend"*, thus twin in the spiritual sense. In my view they are genuine sayings of Jesus, no more, no less, and certainly not a hypothetical «Q» document. They love to call it a «Q» document because, as Bloom puts it, *"it spares us the crucifixion, makes the resurrection unnecessary, and does not present us with a God named Jesus".* Jesus made wine from water. Here, Bloom shows how to turn wine into vinegar![20]

The manuscripts in question were found in 1945 at the so-called Nag Hammadi Library in Upper Egypt (defined as Codex II:2).[21] They are also known as the Chenoboskion Manus-

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19) Matthew 22:39 corresponds to Matthew 7:12: "Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets."

20) "The Gospel of Thomas - The Hidden Sayings of Jesus, a new translation by Marvin Meyer, with an interpretation" by Harold Bloom; Harper San Francisco # 1992.

21) Ref. "The Gospel of Thomas - The Hidden Sayings of Jesus", a new translation by Marvin Meyer, with an interpretation by Harold Bloom – Harper San Francisco # 1992.

With regard to Bloom's conceited remark about Christ's crucifixion and resurrection I point out that in conformity with the "Lamentabili Sane" of Pope St. Pius X and "Fides et Ratio" of Pope Joan Paul II, neutral antecedent study of the Bible is impossible because objective research cannot take place until the Articles of Faith – particularly that the Bible is God's Word and that Christ is the Son of God, who died and rose from the dead on the third day – have been accepted or rejected. Fides et Ratio puts it as follows (no 55): "The 'supreme rule of her faith' derives from the unity which the Spirit has created between Sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture and the Magisterium of the Church in a reciprocity which means that none of the three can survive without the others", thereby referring to Vatican II (Dei Filius III): "Reason is never able to penetrate (these mysteries) as it does the truths which are its proper object (of knowledge)." This is correctly stated, yet the distinction between the secular realm of investigation and the religious one is not as clear-cut as often pretended. Already the Greek philosopher Heraclitus, living around 500 BC, said that "Due to its unbelievable nature, the truth (or the reality as it exists) escapes being known for what it is." We all know that an investigation starts with an assumption or hypothesis. The assumption is related to what we 'believe' to be true or what appears reasonable. But reality is often far from reasonable to our destitute mind. One needs an open mind to access the unreasonable, that is to say, to access which looks unreasonable. This way of gaining knowledge is expressed by the saying that the answer proceeds from the question. But how to ask the right question if beforehand we have forsaken its answer?

I must say that it is refreshing to see someone like Harold Bloom show his true colours. Many 'too' credulous Christians have been put on the wrong track by Judases pretending to accept the articles of faith while in fact rejecting them. Despite the basic assumption that the Bible should be approached from a position of belief, it offers so many logical results that agree with the articles of faith that God's people does not need to believe solely on the grounds of 'the Bible says so' or 'the Church says so', but it may also experience that it is reasonable to believe, no small argument now that in our days the goddess Reason has been placed on God's throne, while it should have been: 'Fides et Ratio' (faith and reason) ...on the road towards God.

cripts. At the time twelve leather-bound papyrus codices, buried in a sealed jar, were found by a local farmer, which also included a partial translation of Plato's Republic. The Sayings of Jesus were recorded probably in the middle of the 4th century. They are in the Sahidic dialect of the Coptic language. The original is believed to have been written in Greek, possibly as early as the first century. Three parts of these same Sayings were also found in a garbage dump at Oxyrhynchus, the modern Bahnasa in Egypt (under registration 1, 654, 655), which contained many thousands of papyri, mostly fragmentary, discovered from 1897 onwards. The Sayings were first published in a photographic edition in 1956. In 1977, James M. Robinson edited the first complete collection of English translations of the Nag Hammadi texts. In his introduction Robinson suggests that these codices may have belonged to a nearby Pachomian monastery, and were buried after Athanasius condemned the use of non-Canonical books in his Festal Letter of the year 367. The wrongly called Gospel of Thomas has been translated now and annotated in many languages. The original manuscript belongs to the Coptic Museum in Cairo.

The opening words in a deficient translation go as follows: *"These are the apocryphal (or hidden) sayings that the living Jesus spoke and Judas Thomas recorded."* From the visionary from Dülmen, Anna-Katarina Emmerick, we know that Thaddeus was the travelling companion of the apostle Thomas Didymus (Thomas the Twin), a story confirmed by Eusebius of Caesarea (Hist. Eccl. 1:12 sqq.), who also points out that this Thaddeus was one of the seventy disciples and not the apostle Judas Thaddeus, who was one of the twelve. According to Eusebius (confirmed by Anna-Katarina), Thomas sent his companion in the year 30 with a letter to Abgar Uchama the Toparch of Edessa, an ancient town near Urfa in Turkey. The Greek Oxyrhynchus 654:1-3 would read: *"These are the […] sayings that the living Jesus spoke [and were recorded by Judas Thaddeus] as well as Thomas"* (the sections between brackets are lost in the original). Maybe the Coptic leaves open the possibility of rendering the introduction as follows: *"These are the apocryphal sayings that the living Jesus spoke, recorded by both Judas and Thomas."* We should not forget that the Coptic text supposedly is a translation of a much earlier Greek text; we should not exclude that a copying error of the Greek original may have occurred even at that early stage, and this small error may have caused the later translators to call the apostle Thomas: 'Judas Thomas', but of course Thomas is not known by this name, neither in the Gospels nor elsewhere in the tradition. Yet his travelling companion Thaddeus is also known under the name Judas. Judas, the Apostle, is only called Thaddeus at the beginning of Jesus' mission, during the election of the twelve (Mt 10:3, Mark 3:18). Later, after the 70 (or 72) had been chosen, he is always called differently: Judas (brother) of James in Acts 1:13,[22)] or Judas not Iscariot in John 14:22, evidently to prevent a confusion with the Judas Thaddeus from the seventy and to distinguish him from Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed Jesus. (N.B. Judas the 'brother', not the son of James whose father was Alpheus – cf. Maria Valtorta 691, or story 551 where Judas is called the [son] of Alpheus.)

22) The basic text allows for the translation 'son of James' instead of 'brother'. Brother agrees with the Vulgate, as well as with the special French translation from 1975-76: "Traduction œcuménique de la Bible" (TOB).

That no true believer, having taken cognisance of this unfortunately somewhat elaborate explanation, any longer dares to call "The Sayings of Jesus" the Gospel of Thomas, since then he would be joining the ranks of Sadducee Harold Bloom, who demeans the Crucifixion of Christ and his resurrection to the level of pure fantasy (see Acts 23:8).

Fragment of the so-called 'Gospel of St Thomas'

1.16 – How the New Testament came into being

The writings of the New Testament seem to have come into being in a much more subtle way than Crossan and Bloom attempt to prove. The establishment of the New Testament from its early beginnings has been magisterially described in "A General Survey of the History of the Canon" by Brooke Foss Westcott, an Anglican bishop, that was published in 1855, the year of birth of Panin.[23)] He was a mathematician who was able to make his discoveries thanks to Westcott's sublime work in restoring the original Greek of the New Testament: [24)]

> «« The Canon of the New Testament was fixed gradually. It was among the first instinctive acts of the Christian society and flowed from the natural expression of

23) Ivan Panin discovered that the statistical phenomena in the Canons of the Old and the New Testament are based on a design impossible to create by human hands. In 1890 he discovered some of the phenomenal mathematical designs underlying both the Greek text of the New Testament and the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. He was to devote over fifty years of his life painstakingly exploring the numerical structure of Scriptures, generating over 43,000 detailed hand-penned pages of analysis. Panin used the Greek edition of Westcott and Hort of the New Testament as the basis for his research, but made use in particular of the alternative readings that those authors suggested.

24) In collaboration with Fenton Hort, Westcott's "Revision of the Original Greek of the New Testament and Introduction to the New Testament in the Original Greek: with notes on selected readings" dating from 1881 belongs to the standard works used by translators of the New Testament. The quotation is taken from the 7th and last revised edition 1896 of "A General Survey of the History of the Canon of the New Testament" (pp. 4-5, 12, 56, 238, 508, 511). In the preface to "The New Testament, an American Translation", which appeared in 1923, the translator Edgard J. Goodspeed makes the following remark: "I have closely followed the Greek text of Westcott and Hort, now generally accepted. Every scholar knows its great superiority to the late and faulty Greek texts from which the early English translations from Tyndale to the Authorized Version were made." The King James translation was mainly Tyndale's work.

the time. The condition of society and the internal relations of the Church presented obstacles to the immediate and absolute determination of the question. As long as the traditional rule of Apostolic doctrine was generally held in the Church there was no need to confirm it by the written Rule. The recognition of the Apostolic writings as authoritative and complete was partial and progressive, like the formalizing of doctrine, and the settling of ecclesiastical order.

The record of divine Revelation when committed to human care is not – at least apparently – exempted from the accidents and caprices which affect the transmission of ordinary books. It is not easy to overrate the difficulties that beset any inquiry into the early versions of the New Testament. In addition to those which impede all critical investigations into the original Greek text, there are others, in this case scarcely less serious, which arise from comparatively scanty materials and vague or conflicting traditions. There is little illustrative literature; or, if there be more, it is imperfectly known. There is no long line of Fathers to witness to the completion and the use of the translations. And though it may be true that these hindrances are chiefly felt when any attempt is made to settle or interpret their text, they are no less real and perplexing when we seek only to investigate their origin and earliest form. The teaching of God through man appears to be subject to the vagaries of human life and thought. Years must elapse before we can feel that the words of one who talks with men are indeed the Words of God. The successors of the Apostles did not recognise that the written histories of the Lord and the scattered epistles of His first disciples would form a sure and sufficient source and test of doctrine for later times when the tradition would have grown indistinct or corrupt. Conscious of a life in the Christian body, and realising the power of its Head, they did not feel that the Apostles were providentially charged to express once for all in their writings the essential forms of Christianity, in like manner as the Prophets that had foreshadowed them. »»

1.17 – Scripture and tradition are indissolubly linked

In the light of the above it is relevant to pause and examine the basic Protestant assumption that the Bible is exclusively and only the Word of God, from beginning to end, as is sometimes said: “from cover to cover”. Many mediaeval separatist movements were shipwrecked on the rocks of a lack of an appropriate alternative for the central authority of the Church and its tradition. In the 16th century, following the invention of the printing press and the general population’s greater literacy, an alternative was found. The reformers thereby created an artificial opposition between what the Scriptures say and what was ‘invented’ by the Roman Catholic Church. What was lost to view was the fact that the Scriptures were also ‘invented’ – that is, they had grown organically within the community of believers just like so many other traditions within the Roman Catholic Church. Even the doctrine of the central authority of the Church has a traditional basis, which means that it is impossible to oppose the doctrine of the central authority without at the time opposing the ways and principles of how the tradition came into being, according to general ontological principles (ontology refers to the process of becoming or being formed). The same rules that apply to this growth process, which caused the Bible to come

into being, have given shape to the doctrinal statements within the one Catholic (or general) and Apostolic Church. It was thus inevitable that Luther's one-sided approach to Holy Scripture, as accepted within Protestant circles, with the exception of the Evangelicals, would lead to the breakdown of the same Scripture, especially when the scientific facts regarding the way the Bible evolved, became known in wider circles. The Bible did not literally come down from heaven but grew under God's caring hand and was embedded in the practice of faith of the wider community, just as a new river makes its own bed in an almost unperceptible fashion. Luther's model and its offshoot – modern biblical criticism – devalued the Bible as God's Word, now deprived of the 'authority' of oral tradition. Those two – Scripture and tradition – go together like a hand in a glove. Hence, provided you know what you are talking about, you cannot speak of the Jewish tradition and the Biblical prophecies without making reference to the Roman Catholic tradition and modern prophecies – or vice-versa. There is a harmoniously impressive transfer from the Jewish to the Christian way of acting, of which the apostle Paul was the first exponent in its new bedding, he who had sat at the feet of Gamaliel who, in his turn, had sat at the feet of Simeon (the same Simeon as mentioned in Luke 2:25-35, presumably a grandson of the famous Hillel), who again had sat at the feet of… etc. Why should God's working methods be different under the terms of the New Covenant?

1.18 – The Reformers' Approach to Holy Scripture

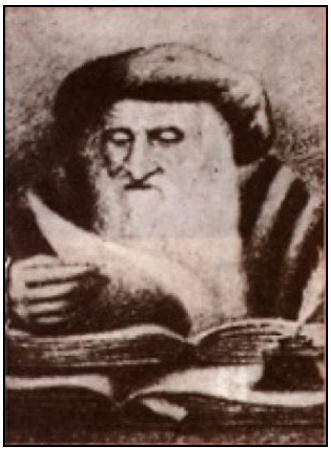
The Protestants should get together and ask themselves what the basis is of their Biblical criticism. That is a known fact. It is based on Rashi, the famous Talmudist, with whose ideas Luther came into contact via the works of a Franciscan monk in Paris, Nicholas de Lyra (1265-1349). Lyra, who had an unusually exact knowledge of the Hebrew language and the Judaica, wrote the "Postillæ", which comprises a detailed explanation of each verse of the Bible or group of verses. The first edition of the Postillæ – which was reprinted more than a hundred times – had just appeared when Luther, the Augustinian priest, started his studies in Rome. Lyra's unintended contribution towards the dissolution of the Christian prophetic tradition and established religious practice led to the proverb: *"Had Lyra not played his lyre, Luther would not have danced."* [25)] Are we to base our Christian belief on this? The Rashi method is 'not' tradtion but can fit in with it if so desired. It marks the start of a valuable trend in exegesis. It has a specific area of application, concentrating as it does on the 'simple sense of the text', with emphasis on aspects of philology, grammar and sentence structure with the insertion, though exceptionally, of mystical expositions. If driven too far it places the rationality on the throne at the expense of the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Does the Talmud not teach that for every passage in the Bible there are seventy possible interpretations, none of which may claim to be exclusive? The exagerated and one-sided application of Rashi's approach led eventually by the weak brothers to the modern biblical criticism, with all the ensuing damage.

Despite all of this, the exegetical starting points of the reforming movement have also brought about a great deal that is good. Thanks to Luther the theological principle of sal-

25) See also "Rashi and the Christian Scholars" by H. Hailperin – Pittsburgh # 1963.

vation through faith brought about a new and, for that period, necessary impulse. Luther stated that salvation, the making of friendship with God and the ridding oneself of sinful nature, is a gift of God, by faith alone (sola fide), all to the sole glory of God (soli Deo gloria).[26] It was also thanks to Luther that a note of urgency was sounded for a serious translation of the Bible – not without intensive interference on the part of the Jewish scriptural scholars. Through this development the emphasis shifted automatically to the Old Testament. I may even say… an emphasis as necessary as bread is for life, since in the treadmill of time the white bread of the New Testament had led to a serious case of anaemia. The less digestible brown bread of the Old Testament is essential food if our vitality is to be kept up to scratch!

Luther, 46 years old (1529)
by Lucas Cranach the Elder



Rashi (1040-1105)

Brad Young confides:[27] *"Sometimes, as Christians, we have accepted Paul's teachings about Jesus while rejecting his love of the Hebrew Bible as well as his Judaic heritage."* Paul's unconscious witness to the predominance of Jewish culture in the Church is also well pointed out by Professor Samuel Brandon in "The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian church". He explains: [28]

> «« Although Paul is so vividly conscious of his role of apostle to the Uncircumcised and although his Letters are clearly addressed to communities, which are

26) The reformers' saying that the salvation of everyone's soul is a gift from God, exclusively through faith and to God's only glory, is in itself a correct point of departure. But it does not mean that God does not reward good works, as is clearly formulated in the Epistle of James, mainly in 2:14-24: "What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can such a faith save him? (...) Perhaps someone will say: 'You have faith, and I have works.' This is what I answer: 'Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.' (...) Do you want to know, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead? (...) You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only." These verses brought Luther to the point where he rejected James' epistle as God's Word, instead of to the realisation that his basic assumption required some nuances. Here too the error is demonstrated in the exaggeration.

27) "Paul, the Jewish Theologian" by Brad H. Young – Hendrickson/Peabody, U.S.A. # 1997 (Ch. 1).

> predominantly Gentile, he uses with an apparently unthinking familiarity concepts and examples which are thoroughly Jewish. In striking contrast to the later Gospel writers, he seeks to instruct, or exhort, or to demonstrate a point to his readers, by some quotation from the Old Testament, employed in a thoroughly rabbinical manner, without any kind of explanation. (…) Whatever may have been the antecedents of the Gentile Christians before their conversion, whether they had been proselytes or God-fearers or completely heathen, their entrance into the Christian Church brought them at once within the ambit of Jewish theology. They were introduced by their preceptors to a well-established and impressive corpus of belief and practice, which demanded their reverence and respect. »»

In Brandon's view it was the fall of Jerusalem that marked the turning point away from a typical Judaic-Christian interpretation of Scripture, which deviation - in my view - became decisive with the repudiation of Origines some 150 years later. This is corroborated by Abraham Heschel's remark: [29)]

> «« The Christian message, which in its origins intended to be an affirmation and culmination of Judaism, became very early diverted into a repudiation and negation of Judaism; obsolescence and abrogation of Jewish faith became conviction and doctrine; the new covenant was conceived not as a new phase or disclosure but as abolition and replacement of the ancient one; theological thinking fashioned its terms in a spirit of antithesis to Judaism. Contrast and contradiction rather than acknowledgement of roots relatedness and indebtedness, became the perspective. »»

The white bread of the New Testament had led - and I write this in sorrow - to a serious case of anaemia. The Old Testament brown bread worked on this in such a way as to correct it. It is because of its love for the Old Testament that the Reformation in general was able to summon up great love for the Jewish people, though this cannot be ascribed to Luther, who expressed himself in exceptionally inimical tones regarding the Jews. Towards the end of his life he took a steadily more aggressive stance against everyone and everything. He must then have realised that he had been the ball in a game played by the secular powers, who were after the Church's enormous possessions. The support received from the German princes, without which the insignificant monk Luther would never have been able to achieve anything, was not given out of high-flown ideological motives: it was lust after power and desire for possession that drove these lords. The terrible wars of

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28) "The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church" by S. G. F. Brandon – S.P.C.K., London # 1968 (reprint), 1957 (with some additions) # 1951 (pp. 21-22).

29) "The Insecurity of Freedom - Essays on human history" by Abraham Joshua Heschel – Schocken, New York # 1972 (p. 169).

Heschel (1907-1972) was a prolific writer and leading theologian who served as Professor of Jewish Ethics and Mysticism at The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, which is the academic and spiritual centre of Conservative Judaism worldwide. In his most beloved book "The Sabbath" he introduced the idea of an "architecture of holiness" that appears not in space but in time. Judaism, he argued, is a religion of time: it finds meaning not in space and the material things that fill it but in time and the eternity that imbues it, so that "the Sabbaths are our great cathedrals".

religion that followed were no strangers to these factors. And yet Luther, if he realised it, was unable to draw the correct conclusions and he is said to have met his end in a miserable manner.

> In Pakistan, in 2009, when a radical Muslim mob of about 3,000 came to burn the Christian village of Korian, the Christian families ran for their lives. But 86-year-old believer Baba Qadar could not run. He could not even walk. The mob found him lying on his bed outside his house. Baba's house was destroyed, but he refused to deny Jesus. Although he cannot read, he told us: *"I hold the Bible so I can kiss it."*
>
> From: "Voice of the Martyrs", special edition 2010

It is on the basis of this great love of the Old Testament that the reforming movement in later centuries came to remarkable conclusions that threw light on forgotten truths in the New Testament, on points that the Roman Catholic Church had ignored. It is true that Luther's belief that salvation is by faith and not by works only brought about a welcome shift in Christian thought, even though he went too far in this, as witness his categorical rejection of such things as the second Epistle of James, in which the tensions between works and faith are discussed. And there are more areas within the Protestant offshoot from the Church in which a welcome counterbalance was and is provided to a certain exegetical rigidity within the Roman Catholic Church, which ring-fenced the garden at places where ring-fencing was not required, in particular as concerns the calling of Israel in relation to God's salvation plan for the world.

1.19 – The Basic Text of our New Testament is Identical to the Original

Despite the lengthy process in which the New Testament Canon gradually took on a more fixed form, we can state that the writings included in the Canon have enjoyed great authority since the earliest beginnings. The so-called Muratorian Canon, dated to around the year 200, represented at this early stage a relatively complete Canon, thereby witnessing to the respect given to these books from a very early stage, so that nobody will have dared to change anything of the text. And though the text of the New Testament is subject to a number of variants, they in no way detract from its credibility, historical fact or Christian practice. Thanks to there being so many early writings that can be compared to one another (Origen put together a collection of them in the early third century), we can confidently state that the basic Greek text, as now available, is very close to the original. F.F. Bruce writes in "The New Testament Documents" (1972) in support of this statement:

> «« Perhaps we can appreciate how wealthy the New Testament is in manuscript attestation if we compare the textual material for other ancient historical works. For Cæsar's "Gallic War" (composed between 58 and 50 BC) there are several extant manuscripts, but only 9 or 10 are good, and the oldest is some 900 years more recent than Cæsar's day. Of the 142 books of the "Roman History" of Livy (59 BC - 17 AD) only 35 survive; these are known to us from not more than 20 manuscripts of any consequence, only one of which, and that containing fragments of Books iii-vi, is as

old as the 4th century. Of the 14 books of the "Histories of Tacitus" (about 100 AD) only four-and-a-half survive; of the 16 books of his "Annals", 10 survive in full and 2 in part. The text of these extant portions of his two great historical works depends entirely on 2 manuscripts, one of the 9th century and one of the 11th. The extant manuscripts of his minor works (Dialogus de Oratoribus, Agricola, Germania) all descend from a codex of the 10th century. "The History of Thucydides" (about 460 - 400 BC) is known to us from 8 manuscripts, the earliest belonging to around 900 AD, and a few papyrus scraps, belonging to about the beginning of the Christian era. The same is true of the "History of Herodotus" (about 488 – 428 BC). Yet no classical scholar would listen to an argument that the authenticity of Herodotus or Thucydides is in doubt because the earliest manuscripts of their works which are of any use to us are over 1,300 years later than the originals.

But how different is the situation of the New Testament in this respect! In addition to the 2 excellent manuscripts of the 4th century (…) which are the earliest of some thousands known to us, considerable fragments remain of papyrus copies of books of the New Testament dated from hundred or two hundred years earlier still. The Chester Beatty Biblical Papyri, the existence of which was made public in 1931, consist of portions of 11 papyrus codices, 3 of which contained most of the New Testament writings. One of these containing the four Gospels with Acts belongs to the first half of the third century; another, containing Paul's letters to churches and the Epistle to the Hebrews, was copied at the beginning of the third century; the third, containing Revelation, belongs to the second half of the same century. »»

I also like to quote Lucien X. Polastron to illustrate that the transformation of original texts was quite natural in the time of antiquity, about which people had no qualms. The mere fact that the Biblical texts have come to us as near perfect copies of the originals proves that from the beginning onset they were considered as sacred texts that, in departure from customary practice, should not be tampered with. Perhaps the first believers did not realize that the words that have come to us in the gospels and letters of the apostles were divine Words, but their veneration of the texts was sufficiently high to do the copying with utmost care. Here follows the quote from Polastron, taken from "Books on Fire – the tumultuous story of the world's great libraries": [30)]

«« The grammarians Aristarchus and Zenodotus brought to bear all their philological science or, in any case, their idea of what ancient texts were, to the production of what they believed a definite text of Homer's writings; this happened in Alexandria: *"They studied the entire Illiad together, says Eustathius, and corrected it as they pleased and because it was too long to read and somewhat boring, they cut out several parts."* Even earlier, Democritus felt the need to compile a Homeric glossary of rare and ancient words to facilitate reading. There was, then, no irony intended in

30) "Books on Fire – the tumultuous story of the world's great libraries" by Lucien X. Polastron - Thames & Hudson, London # 2007 (p. 285). Originally published in French under the title "Livres en feu - Histoire de la destruction sans fin des bibliothèques" by Éd. Denoël # 2004. Polastron refers to Jenö Platthy: "Sources on the Earliest Greek Libraries, with the Testimonia" - Amsterdam # 1968.

> Timon's answer to someone asking if a faithful version of Homer could be found no later than the 3rd century BC. Said Timon: *"You can, if you stumble across one of the ancient copies, not one of the corrected ones today."* »»

If we focus attention on the old Bible fragments we possess, it turns out to be possible to date the oldest of them to within the first three decades after the Crucifixion, such as Mk. 6:52-53, found at Qumran and therefore can be no older than 68 AD. This is probably the oldest existing fragment of the New Testament.[31)] And thus the fable that the Gospels would not be a faithful account and did not come into existence until the late first century – at the earliest, as a literary explosion of folkloric and popular fantasy, is definitely disproved.

1.20 – Left no trace in the profane histories? Unthinkable!

I would like to return to the remark quoted earlier (in §5) that remarkably enough, there would not be a single element in the secular and contemporary historical writings that confirms the Gospels, something that applies even more forcefully to the very sensational occurrence of the Crucifixion. If an event of such importance as the Crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth had taken place in such a way that the time of his execution was accompanied by a deep and frightening afternoon darkness of several hours and heavy earthquakes everywhere, followed by reports of his resurrection and the beginning of a religious movement that spread like fire in dry grass, this could not have transpired without some record being made of it by Jesus' enemies in their courts, legislations, and histories. Notwithstanding, the contemporary recorded history is silent on the subject, so it looks to the superficial observer.

We hardly need to emphasis here that the historical nature of the Crucifixion is of major importance for the believer. And therefore we need to answer the question why the secular and contemporary writings 'seem' to be silent on the Crucifixion of Jesus. In my "Proofs of the Life and Death of Jesus" I discuss this question in depth by means of the documents to be found in a booklet called "The ArchkoVolume", but here I approach it mainly from a different perspective.

I hope that I will give a satisfactory answer to this question in what now follows. It would not be at odds if, outside the Bible itself, authentic contemporary documents were to be found in the Vatican archives and in libraries in Istanbul, documents that witness to the events that form the basis of our belief. These extremely old archives have as yet been insufficiently investigated. In the past, also, no dedicated search was carried out for these types of documents because the question of the historicity of the Gospels was doubted by nobody, not even by the enemies of the Church, who could well have their suspicions regarding the Resurrection but not over the fact itself of the Crucifixion and the existence of a miracle-worker and teacher known as Jesus. Times have changed, hence we need to

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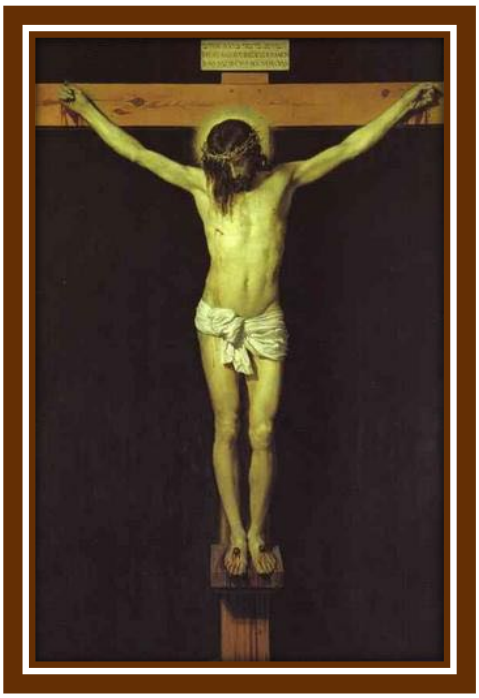
31) See "7Q5 – Facts or Fiction?" by Carsten Peter Thiede – The Westminster Theological Journal no 57 # 1995 (pp. 471-74).

put this search on the scientific agenda. Would it be reasonable to suppose that the archivists at the time, most Jews, had succeeded in removing 'all' the records contained in the courts, legislations, and histories of Jesus time? That seems farfetched.



Until now, the earliest known reference is of Tacitus who then remarks in his "Historiæ" (5:9), when reviewing the history of Judeah between 14 and 37, the period thus when Jesus was crucified: *"under Tiberius all was quiet"*. Tacitus was born about thirty years after the Crucifixion, and started writing much later. So he had to rely on official documents. Could these events have been forgotten so quickly? I think it was more likely that Tacitus was preoccupied with grandiose events: large-scale wars, dynastic struggles and important rebellions. The Crucifixion does not fall in any of these categories. In his Annals (15:44:2-3) he mentions Rome's great fire in July 64 for which Nero blamed the Christians. In the same passage he tells that *"Christ the founder of the name had undergone the death penalty in the reign of Tiberius, by sentence of the Procurator Pontius Pilate."* This was written, according to Crossan, in the year 115 and therefore is not contemporary. So he had not forgotten; it was simply that – if we read carefully – the Crucifixion itself was not to be regarded as a significant trouble as concerns the political aspect of history. The movement as it existed many years later, yes. In Nero's time Tacitus calls it *"a pernicious superstition"*. (Annals 15:44)

Flavius Josephus, a few years younger than Tacitus, shows the same lack of interest in Jesus' Crucifixion when he deals with Pontius Pilate in his Jewish War. (2:169-177) He notes only a few popular disturbances brought on by Pilate's misgovernment. Nothing at all is said about Jesus. However, in Jewish Antiquities (18:55-89), written later, when he recounts the disturbances of the same period, he makes some cursory remarks about Jesus' execution, which is commonly identified as the Testimonium Flavianum (18:63-64), but this testimony is not without problems. I will return to this.

We know the Jews had a vested interest in having the events related to Jesus' life eradicated from the records and they had the means to do it. I now quote from Reverend Mahan's introduction to "The ArchkoVolume", trusting the statement to be more or less correct.[32)] The conclusion at the end agrees with my view:

> «« The great French teacher Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac, who lived in the 11th century, better known under the acronym Rashi, says in Volume III (p. 190) that in the organization of the ancient libraries there were men appointed called 'baalie

suphoths', which means book compilers. Their business was to take the sheets of parchment of the various authors and pin their dates together, bind them in bundles and have them bound with clasps between cedar boards. This was a trade, and it required the best of scholars. All the sophers, or scribes, were Pharisees; they were the doctors, lawyers, orators, poets, and statesmen of their time. The Hillel (the Elder) and Shammai schools produced more scholars than the rest of the world in the final days of the Jewish Commonwealth. Almost every nation under the sun patronised these schools. Now, one of those baalie suphoths was Pseudonymaus Joseph Ben Gorion who in 150 compiled the works of the philosopher Philo of Alexandria, a contemporary of Jesus. This Ben Gorion was a Jewish rabbi, a Pharisee doctor. The writings of the historian Flavius Josephus, who was born in the fourth decade of our Christian era, were compiled by Ekaba, another Jewish doctor, at the close of the second century; and so happened in like fashion with all the historians who lived near the beginning of our Christian era. Josephus was published in book form by Havercamp in Amsterdam in 1729. All he had to guide him was what Ekaba had told and done. So it was with Philo, which was put in book form by Mangey in London in 1742; all he had was what Ben Gorion had pleased to compile of his works, and, as there was deadly hatred between the Jews and Christians in those early centuries, it is most reasonable to surmise that those compilers would leave everything out that would favour the Christians. It was in their own interest at the time to bury the very name of Christ in eternal oblivion; and this is the reason why all the historians who lived and wrote in those days are made to say so very little about Christ or his followers. »»

There is an indication of this practice in the "Testimonium Flavianum", also discussed by John Crossan in "The birth of Christianity", where he italicises the patently Christian phrases in the quotation to indicate what has been added afterwards. Some scholars explain the entire section on Jesus as a later Christian insertion, which assumption is based on a passing remark by the celebrated Alexandrian scholar Origen in his Contra Celsum

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32) The same Reverend Mahan says in his introduction to the ArchkoVolume that "there are at least 500 quotations made from the Talmud that cannot be found in the present editions". Origen quotes from Celsus, whose writings have partly survived via quotations, owing to the polemic of Origen. Celsus treated the Jewish religion with contempt and was an enemy of Christianity that he called "exitiabilis superstitio" (catastrophic bigotry) and so his quote in favour of the historicity of the Crucifixion can be trusted. "According to Origen he quoted Rabbi Akiba who had written that there was a dreadful earthquake at the time of Jesus' Crucifixion, and that the mist that arose from it covered the earth for three hours." The date of Celsus's treatise is fixed in the second half of the second century. Not being able to verify the above statements, I have relegated this passage to the notes. The Celsus quote seems doubtful, because in "Against Celsus" Origen writes: "Celsus imagines also that both the earthquake and the darkness were an invention, but regarding these, we have in the preceding pages, made our defence, according to our ability, adducing the testimony of Phlegon of Tralles (2nd century), who relates that these events took place at the time when our Saviour suffered..." (ch. 59) I would greatly appreciate it if some reader informs me about the true nature of these statements referred to by Rev. Mahan, also as concerns the quote of the baalie suphoths. NB: "The ArchkoVolume" is discussed extensively in my "Proofs of the Life and Death of Jesus".

(1:47) where he says that, although Josephus recognized the righteousness of James [33)], the Bishop of Jerusalem, and in his murder a cause of the Jewish overthrow, he did so 'hosper akon': (ὅσπερ ἄκων) as it were unwillingly. (see also ad Mt. 10:17) This section of Josephus, zo says Crossan, cannot be retraced as it stands in the surviving manuscripts, which suggest that some Christian censor has been at work here, who might have removed a passage that was deemed to give greater honour to James than to Jesus, possibly in a comparison that defended Jesus' condemnation for the trouble He had caused and might have caused otherwise, while James was proposed of being of a better kind, one who certainly did not deserve the death penalty. Josephus, of course, was of priestly descent and once a member of the Pharisees, and we should not expect him to be a supporter of the Christian cause. Yet his later friendship with the Romans earned him the hostility of the Jews. So it is realistic to assume that he recorded the histories concerning the Christian movement in a neutral prose and concisely. Regarding the Testimonium, Crossan estimates that the basic content of the non-italicised quotation is most likely original, but this distinction appears out of thin air and thus cannot be taken serious. Here is the full quotation by Crossan:

> «« [1. Movement] About this time there lived Jesus, a wise man, *if indeed one ought to call him a man*. For he was one who wrought surprising feats and was a teacher of such people as accept the truth gladly. He won over many Jews and many of the Greeks. *He was the Messiah*. [2. Execution] When Pilate, upon hearing him accused by men of the highest standing amongst us, had condemned him to be crucified, [3. Continuation] those who had in the first place come to love him did not give up their affection for him. *On the third day he appeared to them restored to life, for the prophets of God had prophesied these and countless other marvellous things about him*. [4. Expansion] And the tribe of the Christians, so called after him, has still to this day not disappeared. »»

The Testimonium Flavianum passage is found in the extant Greek manuscripts of Josephus (Ambrosianus in the 11th century, Vaticanus in the 14th century, and Marcianus in the 15th century). This passage is quoted by Eusebius in the 4th century in his Evangelical Demonstration; also in the Ecclesiastical History, as well as in the Theophany. But this is not all. Apparently Crossan was not aware of the discovery, or rather the bringing to light again, by professor Shlomo Pines from Israel, of an Arabic version of Josephus from the 10th century (which date compares favourably with the Greek versions used by Crossan), which shows a different Testimonium Flavianum (found in Agapius' Book of the Title):

> «« At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. His conduct was good and he was known to be virtuous. Many people from among the Jews and the other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die, and

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33) James of Jerusalem was nicknamed 'The Just'. He wrote the Epistle of James and was, according to Eusebius, the first bishop of Jerusalem. This James, called the brother of Jesus in the New Testament, appears seventeen times there. The later tradition called him James the Less in order to distinguish him from James the Great, one of the Twelve, who now lies buried in Santiago de Compostella.

those who had become his disciples did not abandon their loyalty to him. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his Crucifixion, and that he was alive. Accordingly they believed that he was the Messiah, concerning whom the Prophets recounted marvels. »»

Relic of the head of James the Apostle in the St James Cathedral in Jeruzalem

This testimony is considerably different from what we find in the Greek manuscripts. The accusation blaming the Jews for the death of Jesus is missing, nor does it state that He was the Messiah, but that his disciples regarded him as such after He had appeared to them, as they reported. And they considered Him to be the Messiah *"concerning whom the Prophets recounted marvels".* Josephus often leaned on the Biblical narrative for his writings. Indeed, if we look at what the prophet Isaiah says concerning the Messiah, we find many marvellous things. We may reasonably assume that the Arabic text, which was written by a Christian Arab being the Melkite bishop of Hierapolis, is probably what Josephus himself wrote about Jesus, because it is improbable that the copyists were aware of the Arabic version of Josephus. We should infer that Josephus' attitude to the growing Christian community was not entirely unfavourable. Apart from Jesus, he mentions with thoughtful attention the death of his relative James, and it may be no accident that Josephus also tells about John the Baptist. (Ant. 18:116-119, 20:200-203)

I suggest the whole passage by Josephus was blotted out by a zealous baalie suphoth and that a Christian, when he discovered this, reinserted it from memory. This might explain why the whole wording has become different in detail, but remains similar in spirit. If it had been an amplification, as we should normally expect, the original would more or less have resembled the abridged text as proposed by John Crossan. The blotting out and subsequent reinsertion must have happened at an early stage, because Eusebius, the Father of Church History, who lived at the turn of the 3rd century, already knew it in its present Greek form. (Hist. Eccl. 1:11:7 sqq.) It is a guess, but this could illustrate the obscurantism of the baalie suphoths. Dr Robert Eisler gives in his book about Flavius Josephus remarkable examples of the deletions and adaptations introduced by anyone who felt

obliged to do so – and that was done by people from all combating parties – which in the course of time resulted in an increasing number of mutilations to several important parts of the original material. [34)]

Of course the Jewish censors not only 'corrected' the writings of profane history, but also of sacred history as recorded by their own kind. In their compilation of the Talmud they would leave out everything that had a tendency to favour the Christian creed. In those writings we need not expect to find substantial evidence about the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth. But this by no means proves that such records are not to be found. If we could ever get to the original scrolls, we might expect to get at the truth. Nevertheless, the Ante-Nicene Fathers (before 325 AD) shed light on the question. Take, for instance, Tertullian († ca 225), the first of the Latin Church Fathers. In "An Answer to the Jews" (13:14) he says on account of the events following the Crucifixion:

> «« My people [says God to the Hebrews] have changed their glory: whence no profit shall accrue to them: the heaven turned pale thereat. [And when did it turn pale? Undoubtedly, when Christ suffered.] And shuddered most exceedingly, and the sun grew dark at mid-day. And when did it shudder exceedingly, except at the passion of Christ, when the earth also trembled to her centre, and the veil of the Temple was rent, and the tombs were burst asunder? Because these two evils hath my people done: Me [says Christ] they have quite forsaken, the fount of water of life, and they have digged for themselves worn-out tanks, which will not be able to contain water. (Tertullian in his Apoplogy reiterates:) In the same hour, too, the light of day was withdrawn, when the sun at the very time was in his meridian blaze. Those who were not aware that this had been predicted about Christ, no doubt thought it an eclipse. **You yourselves** [the Jews] **have the account of the world-portent still in your archives**." (cf. Roberts & Donaldson: "Ante-Nicene Fathers" - 3:170 and 3:21).

Melito (†180), the bishop of Sardis, who is known for his Canon of the Bible, which is perhaps older than the Muratorian Canon, writes in "The Discourse on Soul and Body" :

> «« …the earth shook and its foundations trembled. The sun fled away and the elements turned back and the day was changed into night, for they could not endure the sight of their Lord hanging on a tree. The whole creation was amazed. »»
> (cf. Roberts & Donaldson: "Ante-Nicene Fathers" - 8:756.)

Tertullian also discusses the darkness that fell on the earth during the Crucifixion in his most impressive book, the "Apologeticum". (Ch. 21) He wrote that a report of it was kept in the Empire's secret archives (not accessible to the general public). In the same chapter he states his conviction that Emperors such as Tiberius would have believed in Christ had it been possible for them to be Caesar and Christian simultaneously, an argument that he underpins with his description of the following event:

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34) "The Messiah Jesus and John the Baptist – according to Flavius Josephus' recently discovered 'Capture of Jerusalem' and other Jewish and Christian sources" by Robert Eisler – Methuen, London # 1931.

«« There was an ancient decree that no one should be received for a deity unless he was first approved by the Senate. (…) Tiberius (emperor from 14 to 37), in whose time the Christian name (or religion) had its rise, having received from Palestine, in Syria, an account of such things as confirmed the truth of his (Christ's) divinity, proposed the matter to the Senate (that He should be enrolled among the Roman gods), and gave his own prerogative vote in favour of the motion; but the Senate, without whose consent such a thing could not take place, rejected it because the Emperor himself (once) had declined the same honour (for himself). Nevertheless, the Emperor persisted in his opinion, threatening wrath against all accusers of the Christians. (Tertullian continues:) Search your own commentaries (or public writings). You will there find that Nero (emperor from 54 to 68) was the first who raged with the imperial sword against this sect, making progress then especially at Rome. »» (ch. 5)

A pupil of St Augustine, the priest Paulus Orosius (ca 375 - after 418), who is known as a great historian, writes in his "Historiarum Adversum Paganos" (History against the pagans):

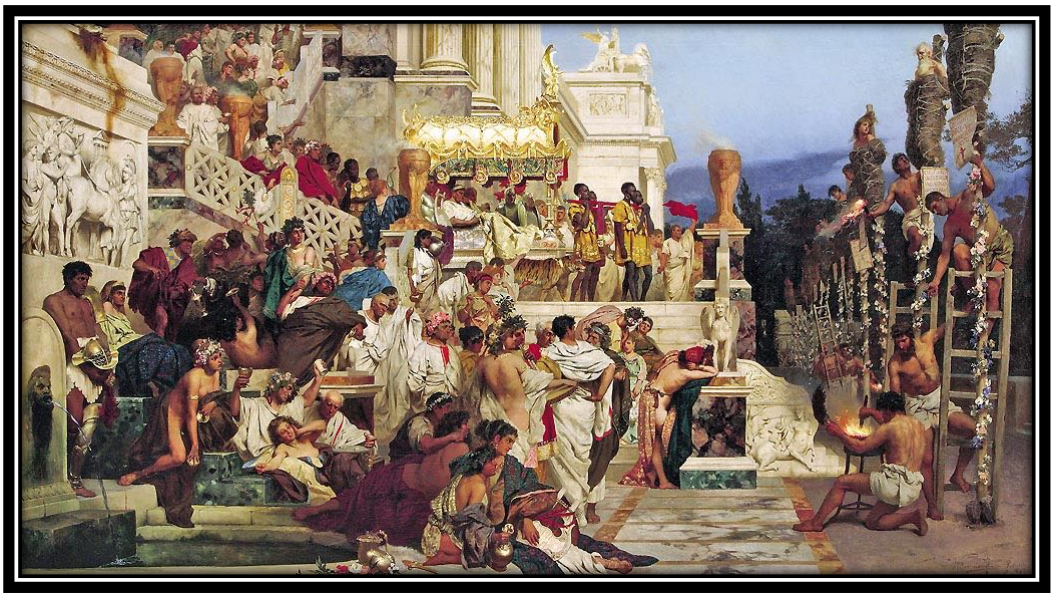
«« When the Lord Christ had suffered and risen from the dead and had sent forth his disciples to preach, it was then that Pilate, the governor of the province of Palestine, made a report to the Emperor Tiberius and to the Senate concerning the passion and resurrection of Christ, and also the subsequent miracles that had been publicly performed by Him or his disciples in his name. Pilate also stated that a rapidly increasing multitude believed Him to be a god. When Tiberius, with great insistency, proposed to the Senate that Christ should be considered a god, the Senate became indignant because the matter had not been referred to it earlier in accordance with the usual custom, so that it might be the first to pass upon the recognition of a new cult. The Senate therefore refused to deify Christ and issued an edict that the Christians should be banished from the City (of Rome). There was also the special reason that Sejanus, the prefect of Tiberius, was inflexibly opposed to the recognition of this religion. Nevertheless in an edict Tiberius threatened denouncers of Christians with death. »» (7:4)

The meeting of the Senate in Rome, described by Tertullian, suggests that Tiberius was still presiding over the Senate after the Crucifixion of Jesus had taken place. If we place the Crucifixion in the year 29 or 30, as most historians do, this is impossible because Emperor Tiberius retired to Capri, in the Villa Iovis, in the year 26, where he stayed until his death in 37. Why he went there is unclear to present day historicans, though it probably had to do with contemporary events, of which the Crucifixion was not the least, and his disgust at the wrangling in Rome will doubtless also have been of influence. From Capri he ruled remarkably efficient by correspondence while the practical power went to Ælius Sejanus in his function as Prefectus Prætorio (26-31 AD). Yet the way Tertullian describes the scene is quite possible and acceptable if we agree that Jesus was crucified in

(Continuation page 63)

APPENDIX 4

The first persecutions of Christians



Things started to turn sour after Rome's great fire in July 64. The terrified population looked for a scapegoat and found one in Nero himself, absent at his coastal resort when the fire started. Nero himself immediately passed the blame on to *"a class of men, loathed for their vices, whom the crowd styled Christians",* possibly because those Christians were most heavily concentrated in two swampy valley areas left untouched by the fire. Tacitus describes the horrid scenes in his Annals (15:44):

> «« First those who confessed to being Christians were arrested. Then, on information obtained from them, hundreds were convicted, more for their anti-social beliefs than for fire-raising. In their deaths they were made a mockery. They were covered in the skins of wild animals, torn to death by dogs, crucified or set on fire – so that when darkness fell they burned like torches in the night. Nero opened up his own gardens for this spectacle and gave a show in the arena, where he mixed with the crowd, or stood dressed as a charioteer on a chariot. As a result, although they were guilty of being Christians and deserved death, people began to feel sorry for them. For they realized that they were being massacred not for the public good but to satisfy one man's mania. »»

According to tradition, Nero's arena – the "Circus Gaji et Neronis" – was on the spot of the present Vatican. Ferdinando Castagnoli's 1960 excavations have shown that it was just south of the present Saint Peter's Basilica. The great arena of Rome, the Circus Maximus, had been put out of use because of the fire, and so the only alternative available for the cruel diversion was Nero's arena. Eusebius, the bishop of Caesarea in Palestine, writes in his History of the Church (2:25:4-7):

> «« The Roman Tertullian is likewise a witness of this. He writes as follows: *"When after subduing all the east, Nero exercised his cruelty against all at Rome. We glory in having such a man the leader in our punishment. For whoever knows him can understand that nothing was condemned by him unless it was something of great*

> *excellence."* Thus publicly announcing himself as the first among God's chief enemies, he was led on to the slaughter of the apostles. It is, therefore, recorded that Paul was beheaded in Rome itself, and that Peter likewise was crucified under Nero. This account of Peter and Paul is substantiated by the fact that their names are preserved in the cemeteries of that place even to the present day. It is confirmed likewise by Caius, a member of the Church, who arose under Zephyrinus, bishop of Rome. He, in a published disputation with Proclus, the leader of the Phrygian heresy, speaks as follows concerning the places where the sacred corpses of the aforesaid apostles are laid: *"But I can show the trophies [monuments] of the apostles. For if you go to the Vatican or to the Ostian way, you will find the trophies of those who laid the foundations of this church [building]."* (The heads of Paul and Peter have always been kept in the reliquary of the Basilica of St. John Lateran.) »»

The "Annuario Pontificio" gives the year of Peter's death as 64 or 67, but it happens to be 64 in the aftermath of the great fire, and that was also the period when Peter wrote his second letter, as known from the New Testament, while imprisoned and aware of the fact that he faced a cruel martyrdom. Margherita Guarducci led the final stages (1963-1968) of the research that led to the discovery of the bones, lying directly beneath the Basilica's high altar, which she attributed to St Peter. She advances a compelling argument that he died on October 13, three months after the fire. This date accords with Nero's regnal day anniversary (dies imperii), an important one then, exactly ten years after he acceded to the throne. It was 'as usual' accompanied by much bloodshed. ("Saint Pierre Retrouvé" by Margherita Guarducci - Editions Saint Paul, Paris # 1974).

It is clear amongst scholars of various disciplines that, even admitting that Peter's remains are those found under the St. Peter's Basilica, he was not buried on the Vatican Hill immediately after his crucifixion. There may have been successive displacements of his bones or parts of them. The visionary Maria Valtorta writes that Peter's remains were twice moved to avoid their desecration, and she points out where the three places are (and the St. Peter's Basilica is not one of them); as of yet her instructions have not yet been thoroughly investigated. In view of this, it is not unreasonable to assume that the Trophy (or monument) of Gaius, found beneath the altar of the great Basilica, is there to remember the site of Peter's execution, but it does not necessarily indicate where he is buried. Pope Paul VI ordered to write on the reliquary containing nine relics of the bones found in the Vatican caves the following Latin sentence: *"B[eati] Petri ap[ostoli] esse putantur",* that is "are believed to be the bones of the blessed Apostle Peter", which implies that there is no conclusive evidence. Remarkably, C14 and DNA tests have never been done to assess the bones' historical period and appartenance to any of the Hebrew haplogroups. Maria Valtorta describes Peter's first burial site, which, she writes, was not on Vatican Hill (later leveled for the construction of the basilica). Her explanations have allowed to locate Peter's first burial site in a hypogeum (an underground chamber) discovered in 1864 but not yet fully explored, near the beginning of Via Nomentana in Rome. Anyhow, the question of Peter's burial sites is not yet resolved.

On 25 July 1948, Valtorta writes: *"Are they [the Roman prelates] sure that he [St. Peter] is buried in the Vatican? Among pagans, in a filthy site, and at the mercy of pagans?"* And on 27th August 1948: *"And at fallen night the Christians removed the body from there and took it to the first Christian Cemetery which was the Ostrianum, where Peter had evangelized, in the first catacomb excavated in Rome to gather Christians, teach them, baptize them and officiate the other sacraments."* On 1st August 1948, she adds: *"Remember that the Ostrianum was used for the martyrs."* And on 7th August 1948: *"St. Peter evangelized at the Ostrianum and there he had his chair."* In other words, Peter's first burial site should be situated in the area of the Cemetery Ostrianum.

the year 26, which the present writer has elaborated in "When was Christ born?" It cannot be otherwise that Luke's account is true and in this case also that of Tertullianus. The article begins as follows:

> «« At present there is a regrettable tendency to doubt the historical nature of the Christmas story as described in Luke 2:1-3: *"And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city."* Since the eighties, the official Lectionaria of the Roman Catholic Church has translated it incorrectly: *"…before Quirinius was in charge of Syria"*. This passage is known as the 'Luke legend', according to a reasoning which runs as follows: Christ came from Nazareth and therefore had to be born there; in order to prove that Jesus was the Messiah sent by God, He had to be born in Bethlehem, according to the prophecy of Micha, repeated in Matthew 2:6: *"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not the least among the rulers of Judah, for out of you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."* It is this same prophecy that is referred to when the three Magi go to Herod to ask where to find the newborn King and Saviour of the world. If we may speak of a Luke legend then this too must be characterised as a legend, even though it might be seen as a charming episode that everyone likes to be reminded of. If we are inclined to be indulgent, then we have to assume that Luke made a mistake, but this is strictly unacceptable because he is a first-rate historian. »»

The census meant by Luke would seem to have taken place in 8 BC, a fact that causes a shift in all the other important dates related to the life of Jesus. After having compared all the relevant historical data available to us it would seem justified to conclude that Jesus was crucified in 26 AD and that there is no question of a Luke legend. My article ends as follows: *"All in all we can answer the question 'Was Christ born in Bethlehem?' with a very definite YES. And if some professor or other declares that the Christmas story is the product of someone's imagination, well... we know better…"*

1.21 – The Bible is Always Right

In the following we are going to remove two stumbling blocks, both related to the Biblical definition of 'town', which theologians use to 'prove' that the Bible is historically unreliable. There is also the problem about the duration of the Egyptian Exile about which the Biblical account seems to contain contradictory statements. That is solved in Appendix 15, at the very end of this book. Then there is another nasty problem: according to a Biblical verse, Saul began his reign when he was one year old, which of course cannot be. That question is also solved, as shown in Appendix 5, and this is done without having to resort to some kind of mistake in the original text. Again, the Bible is, as always, correct, but it is the common translation of that verse (1 Sam. 13:1) that has put us on the wrong track.

Our exposition about the possessed Gerasener and the battle of Ai shows that archaeological investigations are really useful in getting to know the Bible better and to provide a

solid foundation for that knowledge. Yet one could get the impression from commentaries that science and belief do not match. Nothing can be farther from the truth. However, the term ‘scientific’, as it is used today, is to hide that an objective solution to the so-called Biblical inconsistencies is not sought after. To speak with the Apostle Paul: *“Anyone who disagrees with wholesome principles, even the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ, is swollen with pride, but does not really know a thing. Their minds are sick, and they like to argue over words. They cause jealousy, disagreements, unkind words, evil suspicions and nasty quarrels. They have wicked minds and have missed out on the truth. These people think of religion as a meal ticket.”* (1 Tim. 6:3-5)

Under influence of the Enlightenment of the sixteenth century, or the the ‘age of reason’, religion began to disappear from the existing order. And faith in the divine revealed truth faded away. Instead, the theologians looked for the historical truth and the reasonable truth, stripped from all transcendental truth. A radical presupposition in the present theological debate is that formerly, thus in the far away past and prehistory, everything was extremely primitive and inferior in comparison to the present self-accomplished man. According to this train of thought, there is never question of a fundamental going backwards, and even less of a fall in Paradise, or of a decadent spiral. From its original state humankind would have improved itself continuously, not only technically but also morally and in terms of intelligence. Although, in history, all kinds of improvements can be observed, this can in no way be taken as an iron law.

By means of his demoniacally inspired writings, Francis Bacon (1561-1626) became the predecessor of the new thinking. In nrs 16 and 17 of his encyclical Spe Salvi (In hope is salvation), from 2007, Pope Benedict XVI discusses his pernicious influence. He relegated faith to the private domain, where an egotistic pursuit towards wholeness took the lead. The Christian hope, that is focussed on a kingdom made by God, was thereby put on the sidelines. The advancement of society could be reached only by the application of science. James Frazer, one of the founders of social anthropology, suggested that human evolution has passed through magic to religion to finally land at science. Science in its present practice would be the highest approach to reality. Based on this axiom, the so-called scientific or critical research evaluated the Biblical writings on its historical grounds and that would reveal the undefencibility of the religious doctrines. How right is the Apostle Paul when he says: *“They became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools.”* (Rom. 1:21-22)

In the nineteenth century this shift toward semi-scientific thinking took hold mainly within an intellectual and artistic elite, but in the twentieth it had also penetrated large sections of the population. The Modernistic way of thinking had thus penetrated all sections of our society. (Modernism is a faith, and is therefore written with a capital M.) So, it is not only rather interesting but absolutely necessary to gain more in-depth knowledge of these matters; then we not only need to believe, but may know that our faith is reasonably founded.

(Continuation page 70)

APPENDIX 5

Was Saul ‘one’ year old when he started to reign?

In Revelation 17:14 the king of kings is represented, not as a warlord, but as the Lamb, against whom war is waged by the kings of the earth, for one hour, together with the beast, of course the Antichrist. Here the following applies: “He who is not with me is against me.” (Lk. 11:23) Here is shown a sharp contrast: this is about the cosmic struggle of the children of light against the children of darkness.

This battle of titans goes against a people ever since terrible and for always: the seed of the serpent - also known as the generations of Saul. They are in contact with the fire and the heat of demonism and much more. The seed of the snake has an illustrious pedigree that goes back to the very beginning. Such may not be cultivated. Honor your father and your mother, but first and foremost God. Saul’s ancestors are carefully noted in the Bible: son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Bechorath, son of Aphiah, son of Jemini. The reasoning goes as follows. God as king was rejected by his people. The reverse of God’s rule is a king from the tribe of Kish. Kish appears to be the father of Saul. The word Kish is related to Kush that refers to na-KaSH. Nakash (the serpent of Paradise) alludes to the fall that humankind called upon itself. It points to Saul’s descent from a line of ancestors with demonic bands. In everything Saul is the contrary to God as king of Israel. This is also apparent from his name that can be read as Sheol, the wicked realm of the dead.

In view of the foregoing, it is not surprising that his divinely instituted kingship, or his ‘king-ship by the grace of God’, would last only one year, which is in accordance with 1 Samuel 13:1. This is a notoriously difficult verse that most people know nothing about. The litteral translation of this verse is: *“Saul was one year old when he began to rule.”* The Hexapla (early 3rd century) says 30 years, but that is an unauthorized intervention, because the Hebrew says differently, which does not alter the fact that Saul may have been 30 years old when he began to rule. The Apostle Paul, kneaded in Jewish thinking, in turn indicates that God *“gave”* Saul 40 years. (Acts 13:21; also Flavius Josephus Ant. 6:14:9) And Paul continues: *“And when He (God) had removed Saul (when?), He raised up David as king (…) because ‘he (some time in future) will do all my will.’”* The key to the problem lies in

this formulation. We must know that the people no longer wanted to be ruled by prophets. They wanted to be ruled like all the peoples around. The Lord God concedes and answers: *"The people have rejected Me, that I will not be king over them."* (1 Sam. 8:5-9) Then Saul was selected and anointed as king, the very first king in the history of Israel. However, that would be short-lived. Very early in his career the measure of his rebellion was full and so he was rejected by God as king, *"for"*, says the Lord, *"rebellion (against the voice of the Holy Spirit) is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry"*. (1 Sam.15:23) **No longer king by the grace of God, so without God's prophetic assistance as previously**, Saul remained the leader of the people until his death. Beforehand it was: *"And all who knew him from before and then saw (just before Saul was anointed king) that he actually participated with the prophets, asked each other: 'What has happened to the son of Kish now? Does Saul also belong to the prophets?' "* (1 Sam. 10:11)

After careful consideration, it turns out that God rejected Saul after just one year. Immediately thereafter, as appears from 1 Samuel 16:1, God choose David, still a young lad, to be anointed in the confines of his family, in order to become the new king. Yet Saul was allowed to complete the forty years God had allotted, but now as an ordinary prince, even as a terrible despot. He was prey to miserable flurries of depression, the hallmark of a person allienated from God. The people were now in a position to experience firsthand what it was to be ruled like the peoples around, which made them suffer a sort of exile, not out-of-home but at home. The tricky verse of 1 Samuel 13:1 may therefore be read as follows: *"Saul's (kingship by the grace of God) was one year old when he began to reign (as an ordinary prince)."* The next verse should be read as the beginning of what follows: *"And when he had ruled over Israel for two years, Saul chose 3,000 Israelites etc. (to wage war)."* This verse should not be seen in relation to the foregoing, for then the meaning becomes: *"Saul was one year old when he began to rule and he ruled over Israel for two years."* Many translations turn those 2 years into 42, but that makes no sense.

1 Samuel 13:1 is a so-called abbreviated verse with an implied clause, like Genesis 4:15: *"Anyone who kills Cain (before) seven (generations are passed) will be punished."* This implies that God would only take vengeance on him after seven generations, as happened when Lamech, one of Cain's descendants, accidentally killed him, referred to in verse 23; Lamech's son (the youth) was then also accidentally killed by him. (The ArtScroll Tanach Series - Mesorah Publ.; general editor Nosson Scherman, an orthodox Jew - a Haredi.)

It was quite predictable that Saul would not pass the test since he came from a godless and reprobate race. Just listen: KiSH is related to KuSHah and KaSHach (or in reverse order: chaSHaK). ChaSHaK means blackening or spreading darkness. In its religious sense, blackness and the form of blackness refers to the residents on the other side, which applies to some extent to everyone. Kushah means hard, stiff, harsh. Just think of a cruel person, difficult, melancholic and violent. That's Saul's way. Another word with a similar meaning is KaSHach, which means to become stiff or hardening, as in *"he hardened his heart against God"*. In the same manner, as the Bible states, Saul was disgusting and could not please his Heavenly Father. KSH, the root of KaSHach, starts with the letter kof or the letter chaff. Kof can be compared to our «k», like in Korach, and chaff to our «c», like in Canaan. The kof version, KaSHach, points to hardening, and the chaff version to black, as in Isaiah 18:2 where we find the 'area of Cush' that is known for the extreme blackness of the Ethiopians: *"A nation meted out and trodden down (…) a people ever since terrible and for always,"* (which is not related to the Ethiopeans but to the blackness)

APPENDIX 6

Was King Jehoram's son older than his father?

Problem: 2 Chronicles 21:20-22:2: "Jehoram was 32 years old when he became king and he reigned 8 years (until he was 40)." He was succeeded by his son, as told in the follow-up: "And the inhabitants of Jerusalem made the youngest son Ahaziah king in his stead." And then: "Ahaziah was 42 years old when he began to reign in Jerusalem (many translations say: "22 years", but that's not written in Hebrew). His mother's name was also Athaliah, Omri's daughter." How can that be? How can a son be two years older than his father?

Introduction: We should be aware that Israel was split up in two kingdoms, the Northern one, called Israel (or: the Omrides/Kumri) with Samaria as its capital. And the Southern one, called Judeah with Jerusalem as its capital. Israel designates the kingdom of the ten tribes, descendants of Abraham. Judeah/Judah designates the kingdom of the two, descendants of Abraham as well. Before the country was split, there were successively Saul, David and Salomon, who reigned over the Greater Kingdom of Israel. A few decades later, Omri ascended to the throne of the Northern Kingdom. King Jehoshaphat of Judeah, a contemporary of Omri and his son Ahab, actually reigned for some time over both Judeah and Israel, the only time that both kingdoms were reunited under one man, a fact usually overlooked.

ANALYSIS

Here is a solution to the problem. In the quoted verse of Chronicles, Ahaziah is said to be 42 and in 2 Kings 8:26 he is said to be 22 years old. We call them the Elder and the Younger, because evidently they are different persons. The Elder 'reigned' when 42 years old (22:2), while it was Ahaziah the Younger, also known as Jehoahaz, who ascended to the throne (22:1). Therefore, the Elder was co-regent, while the Younger became king. It is said of the mother of the 42-year old Ahaziah in verse 2: "His mother's name was 'also' Athaliah, Omri's daughter". That 'also' is very important, and indicates that both the Elder and the Younger had the same mother. This is possible if her firstborn was given up for adoption early on. We will see why. In that case it is not so strange that she gave her legitimate last-born the same name.

Conclusive evidence that we are talking of two persons is shown by the way they died. After a reign of about a year, both Ahaziahs are killed by Jehu, after which their mother Athaliah, Jehoram's widow, succeeded them as Queen Regent, now over fifty years old. From the account of how they were killed, is evidenced that there really were two Ahaziahs reigning jointly in Judeah. Jehu, by order of the Prophet Elijah, wiped out all seventy sons of the House Ahab (sons and grandsons of Ahab) in order to avenge the shed blood of God's prophets and servants, which devilish Jezabel had instigated. (1 Kings ch. 9 and 10, and 2 Chron. ch. 22).

2 Kings 9:27-28 records the death of the Younger, to be regarded as the grandson. Right away after Jehu had felled the king of Israel, Ahaziah, then being in Samaria, fled in his chariot by the way of the garden house. Jehu followed after him and instructed his men to smite him while on the run. The chase started north of Samaria. Ahaziah managed to flee all the way to Megiddo, where he was killed. Following his death, his servants carried him to Jerusalem where he was interred in the sepulchre of his fathers.

2 Chronicles 22:7-9 records the death of Ahaziah the Elder. Like the Younger, he had gone to Samaria to meet the king of Israel, to discuss the crisis. Jehu's men caught Ahaziah and brought him to Jehu. Having killed him they buried him, which means that his burial was nearby, implicating that he was part of the Samaritan clan, i.e. was son of Ahab. Notice the

differences in the deaths of the two Ahaziahs. One was shot in Megiddo. He was then taken by his servants back to Jerusalem to get a decent burial. The other was caught in Samaria, where he was slain in front of Jehu and then buried nearby. Here again it shows that these two are distinct personalities.

More explanation is required to disentangle the problem. After King Jehoram had died in Jerusalem, all his elder sons were killed by raiding Arabs (2 Chron. 22:1), and therefore his youngest son, Ahaziah the Younger, became king. By the way, 'Ahaziah the Elder' is not the same as the son of Ahab and Jezebel, bearing the same name. Early in his reign, this Ahaziah fell out of a window and died. King Jehoshaphat of Judeah, the father of Jehoram, formed a business partnership with that Ahaziah and they decided to construct together a merchant fleet. There were already good bonds between the Northern and Southern Kingdom, as Jehoshaphat had adopted Ahaziah the Elder, son of Athalia, as his stepson – and he is therefore not listed as one of his offspring. (2 Chron. 21:2; 22:9). By this adoption, the Elder became the uncle of Jehoram'a son, Ahaziah the Younger. By a twist of events he was his half-brother as well, to be explained later. Additionally, the Bible tellls that King Jehoshaphat was connected to Ahab through marriage (2 Chron. 18:1). Indeed, the early manuscripts of the Seder Olam Rabbah state that King Asa married his son Jehoshaphat to a daughter of Omri. Athaliah, a scion of the Omride family, by marrying Jehoram (Jehoshaphat's son), created an even stronger bond between the two families. It appears that Jehoram married his aunt, as Athaliah was Omri's daughter, while his father Jehoshaphat had also married a daughter of Omri. This kind of thing is proscribed by Levitius 18:13, but apparently that was not taken all to serious at the time. That might explain why the Bible does not explicitly mention who Jehoshaphat was married to so as not to set a precedent.

The mother of the Elder is called the daughter of Ahab, the from Omri. The confusing thing is that she is also called "the daughter of Omri". The Hebrew for daughter is 'bat', which can mean sister as well (as in the case of Dinah). Modern-day academics, like H.J. Katzenstein in 1955, tend to agree that Athaliah was actually the daughter of Omri, not of Ahab, to which I agree. They prefer to explain "daughter of Ahab" as being raised at Ahab's court. According to 2 Kings 8:27, Ahaziah the Younger was related (by marriage) to Ahab's family. About the Elder little is said. Undersigned surmisees that he was conceived out of wedlock when she was a child of about ten years old. It's a question of arithmetics and deduction, and it might be true. The Elder happened to be the Ahaziah adopted by King Jehoshaphat. And then some 14 years later Athaliah was married off to Jehoram, when the Elder was 15 years and Jehoram 13 years old, after having had his Bar Mitzvah (the traditional coming of age ceremony). And the Elder's father? Perhaps through an incestious relation between little Athaliah and her much older brother Ahab. Why Ahab? It fits the Biblical narrative and if it had been otherwise he would not have protected the child by sending it off to Jerusalem, together with Ataliah, to escape the terrible harassment in Samaria. After all, a basterd could count on little sympathy. Beautiful Athaliah will not have carried the baby to Jerusalem in her capacity as mother but as its caretaker and as the future bride of one of Jehoshaphat's sons (Jehoram may not have been born just yet), telling that the baby was Ahab's son whose mother lost her life in childbirth. Of course, only if it was indeed Ahab's son, would Jehoshaphat be willing to graciously accept the adoption. And thus the Elder appears to be the half-brother of the Younger, but this will have been kept for a long time on the lid.

Here follows the demonstration that the above is true: According to 1 Kings 22:41-42, Jehoshaphat begins to reign in Judeah (Southern Kingdom) during the fourth year of Ahab's reign in Israel (Northern Kingdom). Jehoshaphat reigns for 25 years. According to 2 Chronicles 17:1, Jehoshaphat's reign began while Judeah and Israel were still in conflict with each other. However, after the accumulation of great wealth, Jehoshaphat "joined affinity with Ahab", as reported in 2 Chronicles 18:1. Affinity means to establish a relationship by marriage. Here, a marriage was arranged between a son of Jehoshaphat and Athaliah, Omri's daughter, of whom

Ahab was very fond. That son appeared to be Jehoram. When risen up to the kingdom, Jeroham murdered all his brethren, except his half-brother (2 Chron. 21:4). After this terrible act there were no other pretenders left to the throne. Jehoram did not have to worry about the Elder for he did not have the right credentials. It is acceptable, though, that the Elder became co-regent, as such a thing was not uncommon in those days. This solves the riddle.

Three problems are solved by one stroke:

• Jehoram is the 'firstborn' of Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. 21:3). As such he dies at age 40 (21:20). Ahaziah the Elder is two years Jehoram's senior. If Ahaziah were the literal offspring of Jehoshaphat, Jehoram could not have been the firstborn.

• Second, Jehoram is said to have killed with the sword all of his brethren of his father's house (2 Chron. 21:4,13). No problem here, because the Elder is Jehoshaphat's adopted son.

• Third, Ahaziah is said to be the son of Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 22:9, while he is not mentioned in the list of sons (21:2). Indeed, as a stepson this can be true.

JEHOSHAPHAT'S DUAL RULE

• After King Ahab of Israel dies, he is succeeded by his son Ahaziah, which happened during the 17th year of Jehoshaphat (1 Kings 22:40, 51). This is the one that fell out of a window.

• Ahaziah's reign only lasts two years. 2 Kings 1:7,17 announces his death, and then in the 18th year of Jehoshaphat, Jehoram begins his reign in Samaria. This lasts 12 years (2 Kings 3:1).

• When Jehoram begins to reign in Samaria (Israel), Jehoshaphat has 7 to 8 years left on his reign in Jerusalem (Judeah) of in total 25 years (2 Chron. 20:31). Now notice something interesting. There is King Jehoram reigning in Israel, while the other Jehoram only begins to reign in Judeah during the 5th year of Jehoram's reign in Israel (2 Kings 8:16). The 16th verse says: "In the 5th year of Jehoram, the son of Ahab, Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat - (still being) king of Judeah - began to reign." (King James translation) It means that Jehoshaphat had not yet died, leaving for him two to three years to go, and that his son was in the beginning co-regent. It is during this period that Jehoshaphat assumes control over both Israel and Judeah, and that explains why he is called "King of Israel", while "buried in the town of David (Jerusalem)" (2 Chron. 21:2).

CONCLUSION

We have presented a convining case, partly based on circumstantial evidence. Thus, the 22-year old Ahaziah of 2 Chronicles 22:1 was the youngest son of King Jehoram and Queen Athaliah, who came into the world after about five years of marriage. And thus the Ahaziah of 2 Chronicles 22:2 was the 42-year old son, also of Athaliah, who by an extraordinary turn of events had become Jehoshapha's stepson. Not surprisingly, Athaliah wanted her own sons to sit on the throne of Judeah. After all, she was the illustrious daughter of Omri and the sister of Ahab (the most wicked king that the Northern Kingdom ever had). Obviously, she intended to have influence over the throne, since she herself ascended the throne after the simultaneous deaths of her two reigning sons (2 Chron. 22:10-12). The heir to the throne after Athaliah's seven-year-reign, which coincided with Jehu's first seven years as king over Israel, was Joash, the son of Ahaziah the Younger, who by then had become old enough to become king himself.

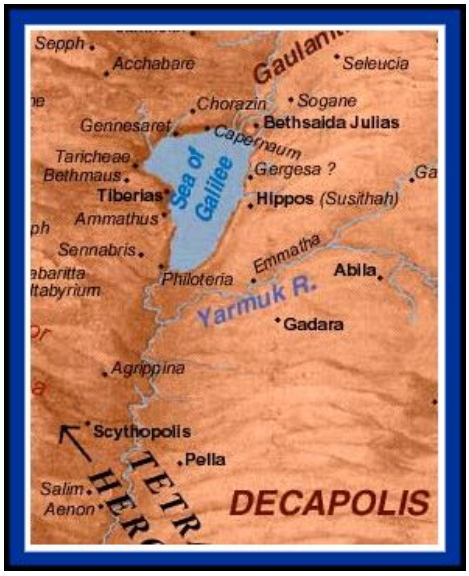
Once again, this convincingly shows that the Bible is the trustworthy word of God!

Photo by Tuppus

God's opponents state categorically: "If the Bible is the Word of God, why does God tell so many lies? God's Word: that's really something! There are whole passages that cannot possibly be true. The incongruities are not a cause for concern but point to the fact that although the Bible is an inspired book it still remains the work of men. The oral tradition is sometimes written down only much later. It was impossible then for inaccuracies not to creep in. The Bible is principally a storytelling exercise and mistakes should be taken for granted! It is the message that counts. When the Bible is approached with awe, this should not be given a naïve form as with the primitive and ignorant people who make everything absolute. Just as God worked through people at the time, so He works through people now; the spirit blows where he will. And thus we must have confidence in the scriptural approach of the generation we are now living in so that, on the basis of the sacred nature of the Bible, we find solutions that match up with the needs of this time.' This train of thought that incites unbelief, indicates that we cannot simply shrug our shoulders when a presumed 'mistake' or 'impossibility' is thought to be present in the Bible. This is a serious question that, fortunately, does not need to be solved by proving what exactly happened. In order to disprove an 'impossibility' we do not have to demonstrate what really happened. Only a 'possibility' needs to be demonstrated. Even an unlikely possibility still remains a possibility, and that is our angle of attack for the story of the possessed Gerasener in the area of the so-called Decapolis (ten towns region), which is discussed in Marc 5 and Luke 8.

No few exegetes have shaken their heads when attempting to elucidate this apparently grotesque tale in which Jesus releases a possessed man from the demons that inhabited him and sent them into two thousand swine, the animals subsequently throwing themselves into the Lake of Tiberias where they drowned miserably. The text has caused a great many headaches, as we can see from the various translations. For instance in the

Petrus Canisius translation (1967), undertaken with the approval of the Dutch bishops, Matthew 8:28 states: *"land of the Gerasenes"*, with the following remark: *"This interpretation (based on the Vulgate) is doubtful, here as well as in Mark 5:1 and Luke 8:26, 37. Probably Matthew wrote: Gadarenes, Mark and Luke: Gergesenes."* That this question has always been doubtful is evident from the King James Version where Matthew speaks of Gergesenes and Mark and Luke of Gadarenes! I stick to the revised original Greek text of Westcott & Hort, which as we have seen is vested with great authority. In this work Mark 5 and Luke 8 talk of the land of the Gerasenes. Matthew 8, on the other hand, talks about the land of the Gadarenes. Gadara was not far south from the lake and dominated the above region. And yet the town of Gerasa said to be referred to is 54 kilometres as the crow flies from the lake. Gerasa (or Jerash) is situated in a mountainous region belonging to the ten-cities-region (Decapolis), which is towards the Dead Sea, in Trans-Jordan, and thus to the south of the Lake of Tiberias, also called the See of Galilee.



The location of the incident is clear, being close to the lake, but this cannot be reconciled with the Gerasa of the Decapolis. A problem arises with the mention of 'city' in Luke 8:34 and the name 'Decapolis', since to the east of the Lake of Tiberias there was a poverty-stricken region without cities. However, the native language of the writers of the Gospels was not Greek and talked, being trained by their religion from a Hebrew way of thinking, and from their perspective no distinction was made between 'village' and 'town' (at the time towns were a relatively new phenomenon). And dictionaries were not widely used. So why, in the Low Greek of the time, should the word 'polis' (town/city) not mean simply 'inhabited place'? It would seem that there are no words in the New Testament that do not appear elsewhere, although a number of words – the so-called 'hapax legomena" – do not necessarily appear in the Greek dictionaries serving the translations of the Classics. The New Testament is written in what we could call cosmopolitan Greek dating from the beginning of the Christian era. This is known as koinè or the common Greek of the great Hellenistic-Roman world and there are still no dictionaries of that language. It is therefore not beyond the bounds of imagination that, in a kind of competition with the area lying to the south, the inhabitants living to the east of the Lake of Tiberias talked of their ten-places-region/ten-villages-area and that they indicated the local village nearby using the Greek word 'polis', assuming that this was the correct term.

That the biblical Decapolis should not be confused with the ten-city-region beyond the Jordan is also apparent also from Matthew 4:25, which states that *"great multitudes followed Jesus - from Galilee and Decapolis, and Jerusalem and Judea and beyond the*

Jordan." This enumeration would not tally if Decapolis were identical here to the upstream of Trans-Jordan, for then it should say: "and from Decapolis and beyond the Jordan" (the latter indicating the downstream), but it says: *"from Galilee and Decapolis".* This means: from the area at the west and easto of the Lake of Tiberias. Such a pair is also *"Jerusalem and Judea"* to be read as Jerusalem and its vicinity, a logical combination because of the special status of Jerusalem in the political and religious make-up of Israel. It happens that there is also a Garasa in the ten-village-area, now called Khersa or Kursi (more than 16 km north of Gadara). Recent excavations have discovered a late 5th-century monastery on this spot, which location and layout on the steep shore suggest that it was a prayer institution commemorating the biblical exorcism. Khersa is sometimes wrongly associated with Gergesa (i.e. by Gustaf Dalman in "Orte und Wege Jesu" [Places and Ways of Jesus]), a place that could have existed more than 3 km south-east of Khersa on a mount now called Skoefijeh. This corresponds with the descriptions of Origen, Eusebius and Saint Jerome, who talk of Gergesa *"super montem"* or on top of a mount, while the exorcism took place near the shore. The knowledge stating that the story of the expulsion of the legion contains factual inconsistencies is therefore wrong. If there is a plausible explanation that offers some kind of possibility to a textual problem, this suffices to invalidate a statement of it being absolutely impossible. The fortress of Gadara, also mentioned in the story of the exorcism, is nonetheless part of the ten-city-region, but this city dominated the whole northern ten-village-area and could be seen from there because of its urban size and elevated position (approx. 600 metres above the lake and 9 kilometres south of it). In fact this city agrees with the traditional explanation.

The cliffs at Khersa

Byzantine monastery at Khersa

There are thus insufficient arguments for the opinion that the story of the expulsion of the legion of demons contains factual inaccuracies. It is not the case that only sceptics have pointed out the difficulties involved in the account, but also faithful believers have wrestled with the problem. The reason why the solution was so long in coming has to do with the fact that it was only in the second half of the 20th century that the division between High and Low Greek was uncovered thanks to the discovery of some papyrus fragments with scraps of text confirming that the 'hapax legomena' also occurred elsewhere and not just in the Bible. Before these finds were made, some people even suggested that God had created new words in order to make clearer his holy intentions and that such terms were first applied in the New Testament! Other deviations from High Greek in the New Tes-

tament were also known because its language has a deviant grammar. A classical scholar, therefore, can easily read biblical Greek whereas someone familiar only with biblical Greek will have the greatest difficulty reading the classical Greek authors.

Gustave Doré – the conquest of Ai / Bethel

After having discussed this example, we will now deal with the account of the capture of Ai, to be found in Joshua 7 & 8. When, near the close of the 15th century BC, under the leadership of Joshua, successor to Moses, the people of Israel entered the Promised Land, the first city to be conquered was Jericho. The Israelites then moved on to do battle at the place known as Ai. Most scholars identify Ai with the excavations at Et-Tell, close to Deir Dibwan, 2 kilometres to the southeast of Bethel. In Joshua 8:28 Ai is turned into a *"heap forever"*; the Hebrew for 'heap is 'tel'. Archaeological investigations have shown that Et-Tell, which had massive stone walls, was destroyed no later than 2300 BC and was no longer inhabited before the invasion of the Israelites. Various and sometimes far-fetched explanations have been proposed to resolve the discrepancy between the biblical account

and the archaeological discoveries. The most plausible explanation is given from the military point of view.

Chaim Herzog, the former president of the State of Israel [35)] and Mordechai Gichon have researched this question with great military and topographical expertise. Together they wrote a book, published in 1997, entitled "Battles of the Bible" [36)], a systematic analysis of all the battles in the Bible. They state the following in the foreword:

> «« Our close familiarity with matters military and the actual sites of the biblical battles has convinced us that fashionable thinking is wrong in relegating an ever-growing part of biblical history to the realm of sage, pragmatic invention or aetiological interpretation by unknown creators of folklore, later scribes [37)] and authors who were used by the compilers of the Bible Canon. »»

They conclude that the battles as described in the Bible could be a correct representation of what really happened. And that is an exceptionally strong argument for the authenticity of the accounts. As regards Ai (or Hai) the writers are of the opinion:

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35) Chaim Herzog was the president of Israel during the Desert Storm operation in 1990 and 1991, that was aimed against Iraq that had invaded Kuwait. To contain a potentially dangerous escalation of the war, Israel agreed not to intervene and retaliate, whatever might happen. As feared, there were numerous Iraqi attacks directed onto Israel's soil by means of mid-range missiles, the so-called Scuds. Yet the destruction and casualties were minimal. In spite of the American Patriot missiles intercepting the Iraqi Scuds on the fly, 39 were to hit their selected targets, mostly in population centres such as Tel Aviv. As a result 10,992 apartments and 1,235 private homes were completely destroyed. Inexplicably, there was not a single death. Many were pulled from under mounds of wreckage several metres high. The only fatality was that of an elderly man who died of a heart attack in hospital after having survived an impact that destroyed his home. In great contrast, the only Scud that hit a military base in Saudi Arabia killed nineteen Americans. That was to be normally expected, for in the first Iran-Iraq war the reported toll from Scuds falling on Teheran was on average nine dead for each Scud! Chaim Herzog addressed the nation on February 22, 1991, in the "Voice of Israel" radio programme, commenting on these wondrous incidents: "The Jewish nation has witnessed many miracles throughout its history, from that of the splitting of the Red Sea to the miracles that we are witnessing this very day. This time, as well, we are being blessed with Divine intervention." The editor in chief of the profoundly secular magazine "This World" (HaOlam) wrote in a leading article: "God's hands guide the Scuds, its lethal shrapnel, away from people to walls. God's hands - it could be nothing less. You stand, shivering and shuddering, opposite a house reduced to rubble, and you are amazed that these tons of concrete and steel can tumble while the residents of the sealed rooms are barely scratched. Miraculous. Time and again, miracle upon miracle, and then yet another miracle; there is no other explanation." This is how it works when 'Hashem Elokei Yisrael' (the God of Israel) wants to save. Have Israel's secular leaders, a few years on, learned their lesson? Not yet!

36) The 1997 edition of "Battles of the Bible" is a completely revised version of the 1978 edition. The quote about Ai is from p. 51.

37) The aetiological mindset seeks the cause or reason for something – a description of an event or physical phenomenon – as coming from outside the thing itself. From their flawed intellectual framework, the Israelite people, like all other peoples of the time, would have adopted that mindset and arrived at the mythical explanation of a supreme being directing everything. This relegated Scripture to the level of the Iliad & Odyssey.

> «« The people of Bethel did prepare Ai as a fortified outpost to forestall the threat of an Israelite attempt upon their town. This was sensible because of its commanding position above the ascent, which was in ‘dead ground’ (uninhabited and uncultivated). Unlike the scouts’ evaluation of Bethel, the intelligence reports about Ai were optimistic. (Josh. 7:3-4), and the scouts, unfamiliar with the great strength inherent in ruins prepared as defensive positions, advised their commander that a token force of up to three thousand men would suffice to capture the town. »»

For this reason the first sortie failed, and a better prepared attack was needed to finally take the city and the Bethel – which is what it really was all about. The name ‘Ai’ means ‘ruin’ and ‘Hai’ in the French translations (Crampon, Glaire) means ‘the ruin’. ‘Ai’ with a *resh* (our r) at the end – though that does not occur in the text – means ‘city’, but not in the usual meaning of the word: every site with an outlook post in the broadest sense of the term fulfils the criterion for a city, thus even a guarded encampment, and that is something quite different from what we mean by a city in our time.

Kneading the Minds

What happens in the shackles of the mind? (sculpture by Ron Mueck)

The Place of Revelation in our Quest for the Truth

This article is about truth discovery and human perception. What is reality? It turns out that, despite modern science, very little can be determined with certainty. Like a blind person probing the wall, human beings search for truth. Education plays a major role in this, which includes the public media. The concept of education also includes the way God speaks to us. God's speaking is called prophecy. We know this from the Bible. In essence, prophecy is nothing but a form of teaching, God's teaching, which in this way helps us in our quest to come to a full and correct understanding of the world. Ultimately, it comes down to this: to know the world is to know God, because God is the ultimate reality. Fortunately, God allows Himself to be found. He wants to have fellowship with us, and that is not just a feeling. Without rational thinking, there is no place for our religion, Christianity. To put that into perspective, the Islamic way of thinking is also discussed, which stands diametrically opposed to this.

1.22 – Along the maturing path of life

When a person emerges from the womb and takes a look at this world for the first time, the task and challenge for that little person is to form a correct conception of it. In essence, it is a search for truth. No small task! But a child is equipped to do so. Who is as inquisitive as a child? The newborn is not a tabula rasa or a clean slate, yet neither is it a full sheet of paper. First and foremost are his basic needs. But life is more than food and drink.

It will be a task that occupies him all his life. Woe to the one who thinks he has already achieved it! That one becomes sclerotic and is no longer open to the truth. Life consists of an ‘éducation permanente’, freely translated lifelong and life-wide learning. In Judaism they realize this all too well. The term they use is ‘lernen’. This implies more than sitting behind a book. Life itself is the master who speaks. The world reveals itself to the newborn, first of all through that which is closest to him - even literally!, but gradually his boundaries are expanded. When we think of revelation, we readily think of the divine revelation on Mount Sinai, but the little one is still far too small for that, although… the Ten Commandments are already inscribed in his subconscious. Let’s face it, all of life is revelation, especially through the media that bombards us with a relentless stream of opinion-shaping facts and discussions. On the one hand, ‘revelation’ is given but there is also the recipient of it who comes to a process of awareness and that is often through the process of repetition. A learning process involves repetition, repetition, repetition. A subtle form of repetition is imitation, looking again and again at an example, be it our father and mother, our elder brother or sister, our teacher, but also the study of the life of Jesus Christ our Lord. In this way, habits and beliefs become ingrained, descend from the conscious level to the subconscious (after a thousand times, a car driver no longer has to remind himself to look in the mirror). Alfred Polgar (1873-1955) stated that it is much easier to believe in a lie that has been heard a hundred times than a truth that is completely new. This underscores the general idea.

It is the persistence that creates a personality, not the will. It is the will that gives direction. A person does not have a weak or strong will, but possesses ingrained habits. A person can be dominant and even tyrannical, have the will to rule, but that is something else. As for the learning process, we could speak of an iceberg effect. The easier something is learned the less there is ‘under water’. This is someone who learns easily, one says, which is promoted by the mnemonic means of associative thinking and a positive affective relationship to the object to be learned or its teacher. Affection can also be in a negative sense, as occurs with a traumatic experience, and that too can be mitigated by repetition of positive impulses (there are other methods of treatment). Under normal circumstances, however, a negative affective relationship will interfere with the learning process.

In Judaism, learning - that which more precisely connotes an activity involving meditating, examining attentively, pondering and debating at the same time - is contained in the Hebrew word ‘hagah’. Hagah means repeating something over and over again, periodically and cyclically. It is the direction of the mind that comes through such constant repetition, which leads to remembering and understanding something out of conviction. In this way the object of study part of oneself. What applies to the mind relates equally to habits in the broad sense of the word. Through repetition, a habit, even a bad one, becomes ingrained. It is not too far-fetched to speak of self-hypnosis for this learning process. The 12th century physician-philosopher Maimonides (and renowned expert of the Torah) used this as a means of changing eating habits and the like. He explained that below a certain threshold it seems that the repitition has little or no effect, but once it pas-

ses beyond, the object being learned suddenly becomes part of yourself, surfaces, as it were. Therefore, it works by means of cumulatation. Note, wanting to do something 'not' cannot register. The learning process only works with a positive impulse and indeed, sometimes it requires some ingenuity to get rid of an unpleasant habit.

How does man evolve along the maturation path of life? It is a path that is broadly pre-programmed, comparable to the pre-programming of physical development from fetus to child and from child to adult. Canadian psychologist Cliff Anderson has done pioneering work in that area.[38)] He explains that the small portion that we register mentally, whether in a small child or adult, is expanded into the whole to form a total picture in the mind. In other words, the part becomes the whole. The mass of perceptual input cannot possibly be processed in its totality and it is therefore reduced through mental filters and translated into ready-made models, an approach that requires many years to reach perfection. Those models are sunk into unconscious symbolic structures, which are the synthesis of our perceptual experience. How that works eludes our mind's eye. It belongs to the subconscious domain. These models are the carriers of our perception, that is, of what we think we see and know. Unacceptable information, that is, information that does not fit the model, is simply ignored or forcefully denied. Does not exist! It has a term, cognitive dissonance.

Seen in this light, every learning process is a form of indoctrination or brainwashing. The victims of indoctrination often do not, or hardly realize that they are being manipulated, that someone else is shaping their thoughts. If the results of the learning process are perceived as positive and have the agreement of the student or parent, then we do not call it indoctrination. Indoctrination is also called re-education. Is that not also the intention of our juvenile detention centers, which often achieve the opposite of what is in their banner? In principle, there is no sharp dividing line between ordinary learning and indoctrination. It is a matter of emphasis between the voluntariness of the learner on the one hand and the will being imposed by the teacher on his pupil. The learning process lies in the friction between playful learning (the homo ludens) and the rod (compulsory education).

For a proper understanding of the learning or transformation process, the social and situational environmental factors and also the emotionality, which co-determine how the individual arrives at his perception of reality (a perceived reality), should certainly not be overlooked. Learning is much more than a curriculum. A human being is more than a vessel into which one pumps something, and intelligence is very different from a score. Knowledge acquisition is an extremely complicated process that takes place at various conscious and unconscious level, something that has never been well mapped out, as evidenced by the many theories circulating about it. People assume that the thoughts resulting from what has been made their own, i.e. learned, are their own and that is partly true but much less so than one tends to think. It is rather uncanny when one starts to think about it. It places an enormous responsibility on educators and opinion formers, such as journalists and politicians.

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38) "The Stages of Life – a groundbreaking discovery: the steps to psychological maturity" by Clifford Anderson - The Atlantic Molthly Press, New York # 1995.

The learning process is extremely important, because that forms our deepest beliefs and they influence what we want, either on our way toward God or away from God. This certainly plays a role in the modern phenomenon called sensitivity training. Sensitivity training is a mass psychological transformation process presented as a harmless learning process, but it is not that harmless. Reverend Hette Abma wrote a very readable little book about it at the time. Here is what he says about it: [39)]

> «« It is quite possible to think of sensitivity training as a pseudo-religious movement in modern society. The training can be compared to a retreat in the religious sense. There is always something of a search for security, to a greater or lesser degree. Other phenomena are also reminiscent of religious phenomena. The commune ideal and group formation in uniformity recall the community ideal in the Christian congregation. Through the technique of self-accusation and criticism of others, one strives to wrought a change in attitude and disposition. Religiously, this can be compared to the confession of guilt, conversion and rebirth. We strongly object to pseudo-religious confession. We would even speak here of a manifestation of spiritual nudism. Openly feelings and emotions are expressed in order to achieve liberation from certain complexes and inner tensions. Public confession of one's own inabilities and shortcomings is made. Then absolution is given by the group. The intention is also to show solidarity with one another. Thus the lowest individual morality takes effect. Our objection is not only directed against this, but especially against such confession as a form of spiritual nudism. »»

One of the main objectives of sensitivity training is to surrender to the group spirit. The group interaction promotes a passive attitude in which the God-given faculties of reason, free will and personal judgment and perception are more or less cast aside. Those faculties are relegated to second-rate faculties. Sensitivity training leads to a decreased alertness regarding one's own physical and mental capacity, which opens the door to a certain degree, at first sometimes very slight, of demonic influence, which may finally and in the worst case lead to complete possession. On the way there, there are many degrees and types of possession, sometimes very difficult to discern for what it really is. Unfortunately, even convinced Christians can fall victim to this. While some believe that God is speaking to them and acting through them, it is a demonic interference, doing everything possible to bind the once free Christian and make him or her unfit for the work God has intended for him or her.

What is true for convinced Christians is true a forteriori for those who have surrendered to narcissistic paganism. Demons work through the senses, but God works through the mind. Where the sensual prevails one is slave to the body which opens doors to demonic influence - for that is their field. The demons will only generate 'fine feelings' at first, only to move on to torments once the grip on the subject has become firmer, which is fueled by their uncontrollable hatred for man. One of the results of demonic influence is always a deteriorated perception of our surrounding reality, or of what one hears or reads.

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39) "Sensitivity Training" by Reverend G. Hette Abma - Maatkamp Uitgeverij, Zelhem, Nederland # 2014 (pp. 19-20), now also published in English. It is a 1981 reissue in the OK quires series from Buijten & Schipperheijn Publishers..

It is an interaction, because through the deteriorated perception the possibility of greater demonic domination is increased.

1.23 – How do human beings perceive?

Through our internalized matrix and ingrained beliefs, one person's perception always differs from another person's perception.[40)] Everyone's filter and modeling pattern is different. It is a subjective matter. A purely objective sensory perception of a complex reality does not exist. By its very nature, perception in terms of truth-telling is a flawed matter, and this is true for everyone. David Faust, in his esteemed work on the limits of scientific thought, writes that human judgment is far more limited than we wish to believe.[41)] He discovered that all individuals, even scientists and so-called experts, medical or otherwise, have a surprisingly restricted capacity to manage or interpret complex information, and this is, as Faust reasons, because of the inherent restrictions of our cognitive capacity (cognitive indicates the difference between reality and how that reality is perceived). Of course, this is not independent of preconceived opinions and the broad spectrum of our emotionality, which colors perception and raises additional barriers.

The process of perception through cognitive models enables a person – regardless of age, regardless of the narrowness of his perceptual cognition, regardless of the poverness of his thought process – to believe that he or she is the master of the whole picture. Our recessed models are the blueprints we use to explore our world and move in it. Without this tool, we would be paralyzed by the overwhelming amount of perceptual input coming at us, which seems to play a role in autism, which could explain why autistic people only focus on an extremely small part of their environment rather than the whole, but then they take in that small part unabatedly and overwhelmingly. We could say that the expression 'God sees everything' implies that God is autistic, except that He does not see a small part but perceives every part of everything unabridged. Even the hairs on our heads God has counted! (Mt. 10:30)

According to Kenneth Keniston (reviewed by Clifford Anderson), being a child is defined by tangible or literal thinking. The emergence of the added capacity of abstract and analytical thinking – that is, the ability to reason hypothetically and deductively – signals the beginning of a movement toward adolescence. If development is not blocked, it moves to the relativistic stage, where a person is able to conceptualize subjects from different angles or frames of reference, a stage Anderson calls 'youth'. At an even later stage of life, he says, intuitive perception is brought in to achieve a complete and accurate understanding of our world, a stage that, with continued development, is not reached until after

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40) Internalization refers to the process by which people make certain rules their own, so that over time these rules are no longer seen as externally imposed regulations but as guidelines that one has set for oneself.

41) "The Limits of Scientific Reasoning" by David Faust - University of Minnesota Press # 1984. Page 36 states: "All forms of information must be interpreted, and human cognition is the basis for the interpretation or construction of information. Therefore, cognition is the final commonpath in the construction of scientific knowledge."

the age of thirty. It should be mentioned that only a small percentage is able to grow further into what is called mature perception.[42)]

Autism and perception

The greatly enhanced perceptual functioning of autistic individuals may be related to the overfunctioning of brain regions typically involved in primary perceptual functions. The operations that are superior among autistic individuals can be encompassed under the term 'perception', as understood in the 1990s cognitive neuropsychology literature (Ellis & Young, 1988). From this point of view the autistic perceptual functioning can be defined as a hyper-functioning of low-level perception. This restricted focus of interest leads to the neglect of entire domains of information. Instead of a global selection process in perception, there apppears to be a tendency towards filtering out entire information streams, but no filtering of the accepted information itself. *

A heron who waits for hours and hours in ultra-concentration for his prey is evidence of an autistic disposition, for he has virtually cut himself off, mentally, from everything outside that for which he is watching. The same can be said of a golf champion who hits his balls in supreme concentration. In him, too, we may speak of a form of autism. While an autistic person cannot do otherwise, for a normal guy it takes lots of training to be so extremely focused.

Autism goes hand in hand with a physiological phenomenon. Research has shown that a newborn possesses an abundance of brain connections (synapses) between the neurons, some of which disappear through a biological process called autophagy, a process that can persist into adolescence. By definition, newborns are autistic. To cure the autistic syndrome, drugs are sought to hasten this weeding out. **

* "Enhanced Perceptual Functioning in Autism" by Laurent Mottron et al. in "Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders"# Jan. 2006 (Vol. 36-1).

** "Loss of mTOR-dependent macroautophagy causes autistic-like synaptic pruning deficits", in Neuron Magazine # 3-9-2014 (Vol. 83-5).

Although this development toward adulthood is autonomous, an educational input in guiding it cannot be denied. In fact, the ability to learn is the special characteristic of humans. That man has a boundless capacity for learning distinguishes him from the animal. The distinction is not qualitative, for all of man's intellectual capacities can also be discovered in animals in extremely primitive form, but that is all. From the observation that on the one hand perception is defective and on the other hand man depends on what is presented to him, follows the essential importance of education which, as we have established, is a form of revelation. Education as revelation stimulates the process of awareness. Here another factor comes into play and that is the reliability of the informa-

42) Research on the rates of mental maturity among the population according to the Anderson model is unknown to me. I would not be surprised if not even half of today's adult population in Western Europe has reached the stage called 'youth', where a person is in the relativistic stage, the stage where he is able to conceptualize something from different angles or frames of reference. For people who have not reached that stage and lack the talent to empathize with others to figure out how they think, it is easy to sell them that Islamists think the same way as us and that they and their culture should be judged according to our own paradigm.

tion presented to us. What is the authority value? This is extremely important, because essentially we must 'believe' in the facts presented to us. And that concerns most of the subjects we assimilate. I have never been to Moscow, never got to know Moscow personally, and yet I know where it is. I 'believe' that Moscow is at a certain location in Russia on the basis that my school atlas tells me so, and my school atlas is perfectly reliable. So it is, as it is called in theology, a reasonable belief, so reasonable that it becomes a certainty. (Heb. 11:1) Others prefer to speak of a well-founded opinion. The heroic defender of faith, Louis Veuillot (1813-'83), had chiseled on his grave: *"I have believed, I see."* (J'ai cru, je vois), rather than "I have seen, I believe." On the path of perception, that reflects the accurate priority.

The reason why I am explaining the perceptual functioning of man is to show how awareness takes shape through a process that also appeals to the Word of God, which after all is given to us in order to arrive at a complete and correct understanding of reality, with which task we are engaged from our first breath of life. Mind you, as soon as we question the authority of Scripture, its educational aspect ceases to exist, for without authority there is no finding of truth in the recipient and therefore no internalization. I hope to have sufficiently demonstrated that there is no sharp line between believing and knowing, revelation and empirical knowledge. They flow into each other. The opposition between 'believing' and 'fact-based knowledge' is usually not so hard. Truth, as we think to perceive, is not objective and cannot be found in an absolute sense through natural science research or even through transcendental meditation, which is at the other end of the spectrum. Creation is far less transparent as people would like to make it appear. The deepest reason why man needs divine revelation, either whispered by God's Spirit, also called the prompter, or through the podium of a prophet, is that objective truth does not exist, in any world, not even in one of Kurt Gödel's worlds (one of Einstein's closest friends), for the simple fact that God is a subject and truth depends on the character of that subject that has been projected in his creative work. However, a projection is somewhat different from the true thing. This means that the factuality of our existence can only be obtained from God and cannot be reconstructed from ourselves. Of course it can be in bits and pieces, but not as the unassailable truth. Truth, nothing but truth and only truth, spiritual, moral, psychological, natural scientific, etc., can only be found with God and is therefore subjective. Normally, when we speak of objective truth, we mean unassailable truth as opposed to hypothetical.

1.24 – True science is a quest for God

God has a number of personal attributes, such as omniscience, omnipotence, etc. We call these in theology 'attributes'. Absent from those attributes is the concept of hate.[43)] By looking at God's work of creation, we can discover some of those attributes. Creation is very predictable, is purely rational. Ergo, God is also rational, not a little but super-

43) God hates sin, but never the sinner, not even the devil. The Biblical hating by God means to 'love less' or, if so desired, to 'detest', as in: "I (God) loved Jacob and detested (hated) Esau." (Mal. 1:2-3)

rational. How could God be less rational than the most rational human being? Fortunately, thanks to divine love, God is never coldly rational, as is often the case with humans. God is so rational – a premise that must be thought through to its ultimate consequence – that God does nothing without a reason. This falls under "the principle of sufficient reason", which also comes into play in science. The great mathematician Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716) philosophized about this. Another consequence of this rationality is that God always seeks the simplest, i.e., most efficient way to achieve his purpose, preferably within the order of creation itself. God's miracles are often a confluence of circumstances, a coincidence (coincidence is a term that is absent from the Bible). The greatest miracle, however, is existence itself. But the greedy self-centered man does not recognize that.

The Islamists deny that God has attributes, because otherwise God would be unfree. He would, if that were true, they say, be 'compelled' into a certain course of action. No, others say. His attributes simply indicate who He is. They define his character. His character is locked up in the Hebrew 'tselem' (image) that we find in Genesis 1:27: *"God created man in his Image."* [44] And God would not be God if He did not respect Himself. He Himself upholds his tselem. In that sense, God is immutable. So the word 'compel' is misplaced.

The great Jewish scholar Maimonides (1135-1204), also known as Rambam, stated:

> «« The term tselem signifies the specific form in relation to that which constitutes the essence of a thing, whereby the thing is what it is; the reality of a thing insofar as it is that particular being. In man the 'form' is that constituent which gives him human or intellectual perception. (…) As man's distinction consists in a property which no other creature on earth possesses, I mean his intellectual perception, in the exercise of which he does not employ his senses, nor move his hand or his foot, this perception has been compared – though only apparently, not in truth – to the divine perception, which requires no corporeal organ. On this account, on account of the divine intellect with which man has been endowed, he is said to have been made in the form and likeness of the Almighty. »» [45]

This quotation shows that a stone or wooden image of something is not an image as meant by the expression of tselem. In that case the Hebrew simply says 'a thing of stone' or 'a carved thing'. The latter in the enumeration of the Ten Commandments and the instruction of how to build the altar. (Ex. 20:4,25)[46] The usual translation then reads 'a stone image' or 'carved image' or 'unhewn stone'. An unhewn piece of rock or brick is indeed a tselem of the underlying reality and that is why the altar had to be made out of rough boulders, so that in the pure service of atonement only God would have the glory and not man who prides himself on his technique and ingenious working of the material. Tselem, then, is not only the outward appearance but more in particular the inner essence that shows itself in a certain way, or stated differently, tselem is an essential representation. So tselem, in

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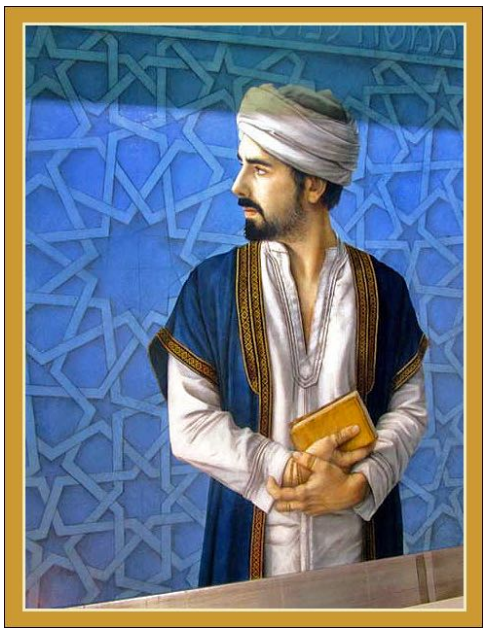
44) Man may have been created in God's image (tselem) according to Genesis, but he deviated and became a tselem despised by God (Ps. 73:20).

45) Guide for the Perplexed" by Maimonides/Rambam (Part 1, ch. 1, p.1).

the strict sense, is not a picture, although in modern Hebrew, now in the land of Israel, the term for a photograph is simply tselem.

Thanks to the intellect, with which man is endowed, Maimonides sees the use of intellectual thinking as the prerequisite for intentionally good action, but also as the only instrument for approaching God, namely by acquiring knowledge about Him. We do need to think! (1 Cor. 15:2) All within the capabilities given to each person, for otherwise faith in God and walking with God would depend on one's intelligence. Basic knowledge about the way that leads to salvation is actually very simple, but it can and should be deepened if it is within reach. If through thought one's knowledge of God grows, one's love for Him also grows. Then we are on the right track. *"Love Him with all your heart",* is the most important commandment. The heart and the knowledge of the heart, i.e. wisdom, are an extension of each other in Hebrew. In God's school, everything revolves around the reasonable understanding that leads through the heart to an understanding and love of God. Knowing God also means a correct knowledge of the laws laid down in nature. God's laws are not only moral laws! Gaining knowledge without God's assistance, even in science, leads to nothing and carries arrogance and foolish plans, …and God regretted that He had made man when the atomic bomb fell on Hiroshima. For it is true that the wise man knows by his wisdom the way to choose, but the foolish deceive themselves with their knowledge, because they are wise in their own eyes.



Moses ben Maimon, called Maimonides

46) The Ten Commandments state that no image should be made to pay divine homage to it. (Ex. 20:4-5) It was on the basis of this commandment that a church conflict arose in the 8th century. The Second Council of Nicea of the year 787 decided in favor of traditional worship in front of an image. The decisive argument on which the bishops relied was the mystery of the Incarnation. This means that when God takes on human form in Jesus Christ, one may then also represent it vividly in a human form. This then is not idolatry, for the image is not worshipped for its own sake but points to the one it represents, who is not only human but also God. The two are inextricably intertwined. In Christ, then, the Divine is the underlying reality of his corporeal countenance. (See also: Duodecimum Saeculum from December 4, 1984 - on the occasion of the 1200th anniversary of the 2nd Council of Nicaea, esp. §9)

Pope Gregory II, in a letter to Emperor Leo III (of Byzantium) in the year 731, justified image veneration by referring to "the image of Christ that was not made by hands", being the Volto Santo of Manoppello. And the Metropolitan Andrew of Crete (†740) referred to "the venerable image of our Lord Jesus Christ reflecting his corporeality". He was referring to the shroud of Turin. Both meant to say: we do not fabricate an image of Christ the Son of God because He Himself miraculously left us an image of Himself. This, once and for all, legitimized the worship of his image.

The exquisite means of gaining wisdom lies in the study of God's revelatory gift, the Word. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, gives us life in God through the Holy Scriptures. In the letter to the Hebrews, we read: *"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."* (Hebr. 4:12) And in Paul's letter to Timothy, who was his beloved child in the faith, we read: *"From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."* (2 Tim. 3:15-17)

1.25 – Basics in Education

Originally education meant the drawing out of a person's innate talents and abilities by imparting the knowledge of languages, scientific reasoning, history, literature, rhetoric, etc. – the channels through which those abilities would flourish and serve. This concept goes back to the Latin root of the word 'eductus': to bring out, lead forth; from 'ducere': to lead. Hence, to develop the faculties and powers of by means of teaching, instruction, or schooling.

But today people see it differently. To the experimental psychologist of our age, education is the process of exposing the student to 'meaningful' experiences so as to ensure desired reactions. In John Dewey's (1859-1952) own words: *"The ultimate problem of all education is to coordinate the psychological and social factors. (...) The coordination demands (...) that the child be capable of expressing himself, but in such a way as to realize social ends."* In his eyes, the redefinition of 'education' meant feeding experiential data to a young brain and nervous system, rather than the teaching of mental skills, which led to the abdication of the traditional role of the teacher as educator. Its place was taken by the concept of the teacher as a guide in the socialization of the child, leading each youngster to 'adapt' to the specific 'behavior' required of him in order to 'get along' in his group.[47)] Dewey, who was most influential in shaping the educational system in the United States and beyond, called for a levelling of individual differences into a common pool of students who are the object of learning technicians devising the social order of the future, wherein Man shall be subservient to the State. Today's schools have become factories for the output of uniform sausages destined for the city called world.

How different and more balanced were classical views on education! Henk Dijkgraaf highlighted some of this in a 2007 essay:

> «« Anyone wishing to reinforce the mental powers of growing children must, according to the great Protestant Reformer Philipp Melanchton (1497-1560), above all concentrate on their language skills. Children's linguistic sensitivity sharpens their powers of observation with regard to reality. While it is true that immediate observations provide facts, their mutual relationships are accessible only to thought

47) "The Leipzig Connection" by Paolo Lionni - Heron Books # 1980 (pp. 8, 18-9, 84-5).

for which, of course, language is its instrument. Reality is not given to us unmediated: we track down its significance thanks to language. *"Because words (verba) are signs of things (res), the knowledge of words precedes."* Language, in its capacity as a vehicle for the mind, must therefore be a 'golden chariot'. Only then are the conditions met for a logical train of thought.

Next to education in its pure sense there exists the need to create pious citizens, that is to say, citizens who seek God's Will. To foster that attitude is no easy task for the teacher! While the range of the human will may be extremely limited in relation to the ideal, it can be broadened by a form of upbringing. Two factors play an important part here: the overview of reason can be enlarged by teaching (doctrina) and the accommodation of the passions with regard to the will can be reinforced by habit-forming or discipline (assuefactio seu disciplina). Doctrina et disciplina are the foundations on which upbringing and education rest – and their extension is where Melanchthon's humanist ideal is to be found: the person in whom the capacities of reason, will and passions are hierarchically ordered. According to Melanchthon, therefore, the educator's task is moral-pedagogical. Hence, the upbringing is foremost ethical teaching (and is not destined to create docile citizens who fit within a common mold). »» [48)]

I hope to have thus shown that man needs God in everything, even for the methodical exploration of our world, as we are used to do in science. The fact is that man cannot do without God and his revelatory gifts. For all his activities man needs God, while today's society with its self-governing man claims the opposite.

48) "Melanchthons Ideaal van Vroomheid & Eruditie" (Melanchthon's Ideal of Piety & Erudition) by Henk Dijkgraaf – Bitterlemon nr. 3 # May 2007 (pp. 44-45).

APPENDIX 7

The Hidden Nature of Complexity

Taken from "The Limits of Scientific Reasoning" *by* David Faust

University of Minnesota Press – Minneapolis, USA # 1984 (pp. 21-25)

There is reason to suspect that many of the cognitive operations scientists perform in interpreting the world take place outside of conscious awareness. One need not adopt a psychoanalytic model of the unconscious mind to make this argument. (…) One can postulate that through repeated practice cognitive operations that are initially learned and applied consciously can be executed automatically and with little, if any, need of conscious meditation. (…) Scientists may undergo a similar transition as they acquire expertise. The early attempts (by students in a particular field of science) to apply (the prevailing) world views are methodical and plodding, but over time they become effortless and automatic. (In time) the application may become so automatic that the underlying chains of reasoning are inaccessible to conscious analysis.

The common inability of scientists to verbalize the reasoning steps underlying their interpretations may partially reflect such a process. Perhaps what Polanyi [1966] calls tacit knowledge, or what Kuhn [1970] considers rules of seeing that cannot be verbalized, actually reflect cognitive operations that were once conscious but that have become automatic and inaccessible to conscious analysis. Scientists, then, may often be unaware of the cognitive strategies they use, precluding reliable phenomenological reports. Although scientists sometimes may overestimate their capacity to perform certain types of complex cognitive operations, at other times they may fail to recognize many of the reasoning and perceptual processes that underlie their interpretations of the world.

Scientists may often fail to consider more than a relatively limited range of information. Attention to the information that they do consider and the relatively simple conclusions that they draw, rather than to the informations that is available, may lead one to erroneously assume that complex information is not present. In other words, the range of information that is actually considered and managed should not be mistaken with the range of relevant information that is potentially available and could be considered. In examining this possibility, we should recognize what has and has not been claimed thus far. It has been claimed that for most or all scientific jugments, a complex matrix of relevant information and considerations exists. It has not been claimed that, in practice, scientists take all of this information or these considerations into account, or at least that they do this competently. [In fact, the central thesis of my book is that they are incapable of doing so.] In practice, scientists may often used cognitive and problem-solving approaches that simplify decision making and potentially mask the presence of complex information. Their use of these strategies does not indicate that the available information is simple; rather, it may represent a response to the presence of complex information.

APPENDIX 8

The Place of Reasonable Thinking within Islam

Islamists find the idea that God is forced to respect Himself intolerable, even blasphemous, because God is no slave and is under no obligation whatsoever. In their eyes God is unknowable and no one can predict what He wants because He can wake up one day with a certain thought and think differently the next day, although there are things that are immutable such as the future that is being predicted in the Qur'an. If there is a rule for the common man to be followed, all that can be said about it is that the rule exists and no more. A sophisticated theological logic has no place within Islam, is excluded, even in their legal system. A book or instruction manual such as "The Principles of the Sharia" (the body of religious Islamic law) does not exist. The five major goals of the Sharia do exist but not the foundational rules of Sharia. Those goals are: the protection of sound religious practice, sustaining life, sanity, the family, and the individual and general welfare, but there it stops. However, the book "Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence" does exist, but that it something different. Everything in the Islamic universe is contained in rules down to the smallest detail without the need to look for logical connections between those different rules. No need is felt to establish a logical structure of the rules and their interrelationships, as is commonplace here in the West, where courses exist on the university like "The Principles of Law". In Islamic eyes that would be a pointless exercise. In an absurd extrapolation of the general concept, it happened in the 1980s in Pakistan that it was forbidden for newspapers to give weather forecasts because the weather is in God's hand and would therefore be unpredictable. And so it was considered unbecoming to dare predict the weather. What those poor Islamites did not realize is that they too assign attributes to God, for they say that He is essentially unknowable and beyond human reasoning, also in little things. So they are sitting in the same barge as us, but at the bottom in the cheapest seats, while we Jews and Christians sit on the sunlit deck.

The perpetual work of creation

Thomas Aquinas bears witness to the continuous creation or the 'creatio continua': *"By his intellect and will (...) by his operation God preserves things in being. (...) Nothing could continue to remain in being, if the divine operation were to cease."* Aquinas says further: *"The being of every creature depends on God, so that not for a moment could it subsist, but would fall into nothingness, were it not kept in being by the operation of the divine power."* **

* Thomas Aquinas: "Summa Contra Gentiles" (Part 3, 65)
** Thomas Aquinas: "Summa Theologica" (Part 1, 104.1)

The Islamists do recognize a theological problem because, despite God's unpredictability, our environment is extremely consistent. It is a thorn in their side that we in the West with our technologized society have been able to take advantage of this so cunningly, while they see themselves as the gentleman's race. They say, and rightly so, that a miracle for God does not exist, for a miracle for God is merely the departure from a habit.[49)] In the creatio continuo, the creation, by a miracle of God's omnipotence, is created anew at every single moment, and they are right about that.

That is a Thomistic thought too. But they add that God can deviate from his habit out of capriciousness. After all, they say, what is good in God's eyes today may be evil in his eyes tomorrow, and whoever goes to Hell today may go to Heaven tomorrow. Why? Because, in his autonomy, He can change his mind. And why is that? No one knows, they say, because God is not and will not be accountable to anyone (another attribute). With the first part of this sentence (God does not have to), I agree, not with the second part (God will not).[50] The Islamic world of thought, which I have set forth here, and which some of us may find ludicrous, is so self-evident to the Islamists that literature references are unnecessary.[51]

The Islamic approach is worrisome. For if people do not want to learn because reasonable thinking has been excluded, they become like animals. In Jewish thought, there is no clear distinction between man and beast. Only through intellectual effort can a person become a real 'mensch' (human). To label someone as a real 'mensch' is one of the greatest compliments within Judaism. Anthropologically, everyone is born human, but they have yet to become human in God's image (tselem), a real human being who listens to his calling and walks along God's ways. With regard to Islamic fundamentalism, Maimonides, in logical consequence of the foregoing, arrives at an extreme position. It should be understood that the term 'man' is not a neutral term in Judaism, as it is here in the West. It takes a lot to be considered a human being in Judaism! Here then his view:

> «« The people 'outside' are all those who have no religion, neither a religion based on speculation nor one based on lore. Such are the extreme Turks who dwell north, the Kushites who live in the south, and there are some among us (in Egypt) who are the same. I consider them irrational beings, not human beings; they are below humanity, but yet above apes, for they have the form and shape of a human being and a mental faculty that is above the ape. »» [52]

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49) Physics research is inquiry into God's 'habits'. Science assumes premises and has come very far with that. The proposition that those premises are objective is, in my view, too ambitious (would Gödel's incompleteness theorems apply to it?). So is it with the God-given moral order. Why has God given it? Because, as Creator, He knows what is best for us. We can rationalize morality. After all, God is reasonable minded and has our happiness in mind, but to set up a perfect morality the other way around from the objective that man should be happy is far from easy and perhaps even impossible.

50) The consistency, say lawfulness, predictability and rationality of our environment has not escaped even the Islamist. If you separate the head from the torso, death always follows, which seems to be a favorite pastime within Islam. Why that is 'always' so, they struggle with theologically. Well, always... God can depart from a custom if He sees fit to do so. Saint Denis was beheaded and then walked on for several 'lieux' with his head under his arm and then he laid down somewhere and died. On that place was built the church in which all the French monarchs are buried. There is also the recent case, which was reported in an evangelical magazine, of an Indonesian whose head was cut off by a Muslim mob by a hair. He was allowed to see Heaven and was then sent back into his body by God, and what transpired: his neck with a scar all around was instantly and totally healed.

51) Those who want to delve into the Islamic view of the world can read the book by Robert R. Reilly: "The Closing of the Muslim Mind - How intellectual suicide created the modern Islamist crisis" - ISI Books, Wilmington, Delaware # 2010. Reilly writes about the ban on weather forecasting in Pakistan from 1983 to 1984, on the grounds that such a thing shortchanges God's freedom of action.

52) "Guide for the Perplexed" by Maimonides/Rambam (Part 3, Ch. 5, p. 1).

APPENDIX 9

The Place of God's Revelation in the Life of the Church according to Modernist Views

The Feeling of Faith prevails - Everything must yield to it, yes even the Supreme Ecclesiastical Authority.

In June 2014, Bergoglio published a paper on the experience of faith: "The Sensus Fidei in the Life of the Church". In essence, this document is about the place of divine revelation in gaining a clear and complete understanding of what to believe, as the progressives would like to see it. The term sensus fidei is far from neutral, for it constitutes the core idea of Theological Modernism, which Pope Pius X characterized as the piling up of all heresies (omnium hæreseon collectum).

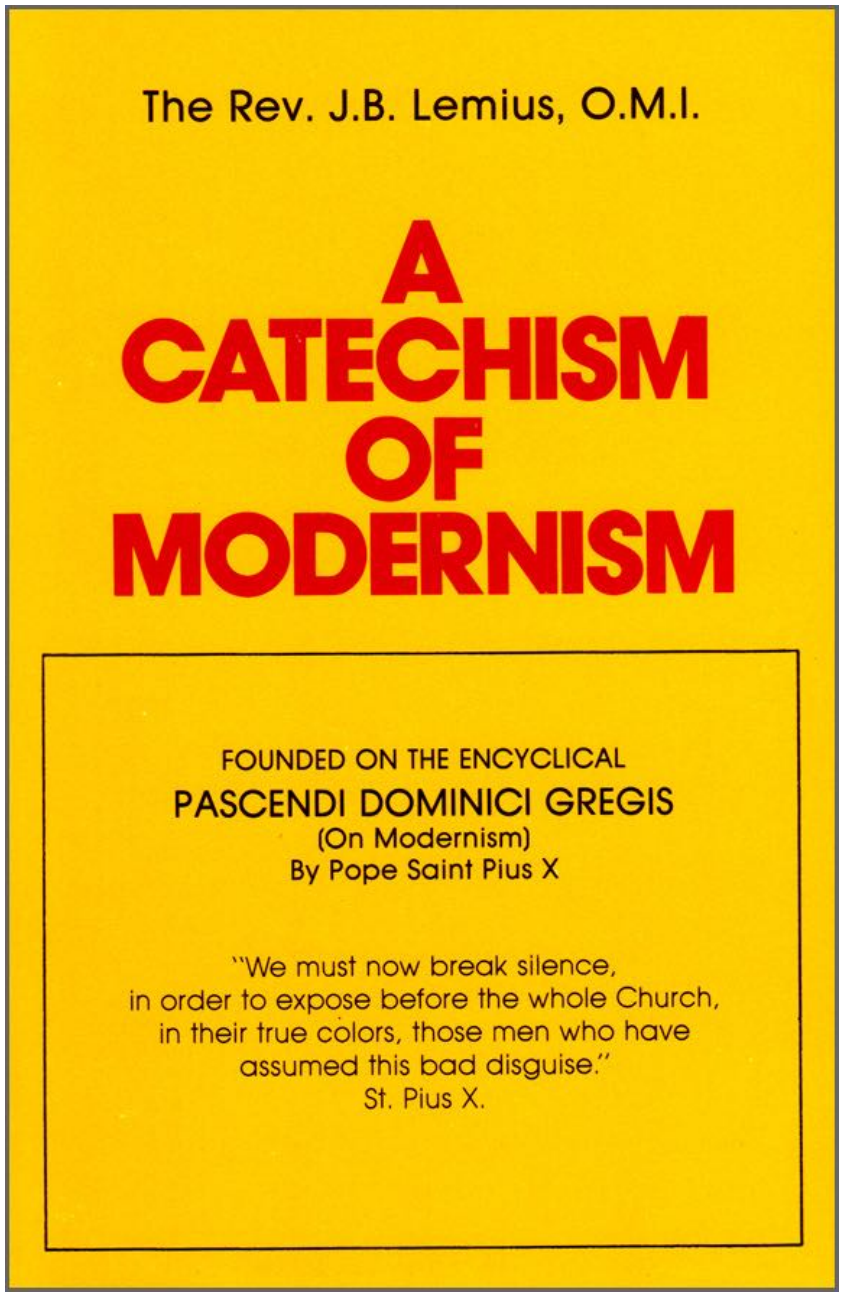
How this should be placed in its context is clear from Father Lemius' review of the encyclical against Theological Modernism that came out in 1907. Lemius' work, published shortly afterwards, in order to make it more accessible, is called "Catechism of Modernism".

The idea of the absolute superiority of man and his reason, as an outgrowth of humanism, came to the fore especially after the French Revolution. 'Rationalism' was then coupled with the 'romanticism' of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (†1778), which prioritizes individuality, uniqueness and spontaneous subjective emotions and 'appetites'.

Every religion, according to Modernism, can and must be explained from man. There would be no exception to this. And it continues: religion as an exponent of faith finds its origin in human need. This so-called doctrine has been condemned by Pascendi as 'immanentism'. While earlier heresies attacked one or more truths of the Catholic creed, Modernism rejects practically the entire teaching of the Church; it even questions or disregards the existence of a personal God.

Pope Pius IX fiercely fought rationalist and naturalist unbelief, which was not then known by the name of Modernism. In 1864, Pius IX released "The Syllabus" listing eighty errors about God, the Church and some other issues. In 1870, he placed the crowning glory on his work by convening the First Vatican Council. His second successor, Pius X, condemned Theological Modernism in his 1907 encyclical: "Pascendi Dominici Grecis" (on the shepherding of the flock), which dealt mainly with dogmatic and Biblical issues, as prevailed among the Church's opponents, but it hardly dealt with questions of morality. The emergence of this movement was fueled by the philosophy of Immanuel Kant (†1804), according to whom God and the supernatural cannot be known, although God's existence 'an sich' was not denied.

Modernism is, however, willing to accept religious 'feeling' as the unique element of revelation. According to Modernism, our idea of God stems from man's shadowy religious sentiment and does not find its origin in an objective truth. The formulas we use to express a religious truth are thus weakened into mere symbolic statements. The Church and its sacraments, therefore, also cannot have been given to humanity by a Christ-figure as an unchanging institution; Holy Scripture, therefore, also cannot have been inspired by the Holy Spirit, and it must therefore contain numerous human failings and errors, as, for that matter, does any work produced by men. The dogma of the Catholic Church is said to be merely 'formula' that with the passage of time is subject to change, and is focused on what is deemed serviceable within "Das Daseinsgefühl" (sense of life or existential feeling) at that particular point in time. The feeling of faith, it is said, begins with the individual as the 'sensus fidei'. If that feeling of faith extends to the entire church community one speaks of the 'sensus fidei fidelium', or 'sensus fidelium'. It is just what value is assigned to it. If absolutized, the sledgehammer of the Church has been introduced.



The following is a quotation from the "**A Catechism of Theological Modernism**" (vol. 1, chap. 1:3-4). This is given to you to be on your guard. Forewarned is forearmed!

• The Presumed Origin of Religion

QUESTION — *Should anyone ask how it is that this 'need of the divine', which Man experiences within himself, grows up into a religion, what do the Modernists reply?*

ANSWER — The Theological Modernist replies thus: „Science and history, they say, are confined within two limits, the one external, namely, the visible world, the other internal, which is consciousness. When one or the other of these boundaries has been reached there can be no further progress, for beyond is the unknowable. In presence of this unknowable, whether it is outside man and beyond the visible world of nature, or lies hidden within the unconscious, the need of the divine excites in a soul with a propensity toward religion a certain special sentiment."

Comment: In this regard, the Modernist submits to the rules of apostatic fideism, which excludes the reasonable component in the formation of belief.

And they continue: „And this sentiment possesses, implied within itself both as its own object and as its intrinsic cause, the reality of the divine, and in a way unites man with God. It is this sentiment (de sensus fidei) to which Modernists give the name of 'faith', and this it is which they consider the beginning of any religion." Comment: God as an independent person will then have ceased to exist!

• Notion of Revelation

Q. — *Is Modernist philosophy confined to the above mentioned system?*

A. — „We have not yet come to the end of their philosophy, or, to speak more accurately, their folly."

Q. — *What do the Modernists find in their pretended 'sentiment of the divine'?*

A. — „Modernism finds in this sentiment not faith only, but 'with' and 'in' faith - as they have described - they are fond to say that the gift of revelation 'abides'."

Q. — *What, according to them, is the source of revelation and what meaning do they attach to it?*

A. — „What more, they say, can one require for revelation? Is not that religious sentiment, which is perceptible in the consciousness, equal to revelation or at least the beginning of revelation? Nay, is not God Himself, as He manifests Himself to the soul, indistinctly it is true, in this same religious sense, revelation?" And they add: „Since God is both the object and the beginning of faith, this revelation is at the same time of God and from God; that is, God is both the revealer and the revealed."

Q. — *What absurd conclusion follows from this philosophy, or rather, from this Modernist raving?*

A. — „Hence springs the ridiculous proposition of the Modernists that every religion, according to the aspect under consideration, must be regarded as both natural and supernatural. It follows that each religion, whatever its views, deserves our full respect!"

Q. — *What follows more from this?*

A. — „Hence it is that they make the conscious observation of something equal to something called revelation: the way of expression then becomes synonymous to the sentiment."

Q. — *What supreme and universal law would the Modernists derive from this doctrine?*

A. — „The law according to which religious consciousness is given as the universal rule, to be put on an equal footing with revelation, and to which all must submit. This leads to the strange construction that, in matters of faith, the only objective measure is the subjective one; that, therefore, the temporal popular perception (the sensus fidelium) prevails."

Comment: In this sense, a synonym for popular perception is "das gesundes Volksempfinden" (the healthy popular feeling), which is a concept that originated in German Romanticism, which in the following century became infamous for the role it was assigned in National Socialism, where it was elevated to an exclusive source of law in criminal law that, when suitable, overruled the law.

Q. — *Must everything, even the suptreme authority of the Church, be subjected to this law?*

A. — „To this universal law all must be made subservient. Yes, even the supreme authority of the Church (the magisterium) in its threefold function: in the realm of teaching, in the province of sacred liturgy and for its application of discipline."

Further Comments

The report in 2014 of the theological commission on the Sensus Fidei comes across as Modernist writing. Why else are no examples cited of the negative experiences in history with popular sensus fidei or popular devotion.* There are examples of this, both inside and outside the Church. There are undoubtedly positive experiences as well. However, the fact that a practice is a 'living devotion' accepted by a broad mass does not in itself constitute proof of its legitimacy. Consider the strict condemnation by the Roman Church of flagellantism, which revealed the power of self-flagellation, that can be considered within the so-called Holy Church as one of the worst depravities that occurred there.

Pious self-flagellation with blood flowing was no exception. Flagellants, also called scourge or cross brothers, were fanatics who marched through the land in 'pious' processions in the 13th to 15th centuries seeking to enforce God's mercy with self-flagellation. The followers were known for their public floggings, with up to ten thousand men who marched in large crowds through the plains and cities, although they were sometimes denied entry to a city. The practice had no clear doctrine or recognizable leadership,

but this mass hysteria, which is what it actually was, took place in separate outbursts all over Europe. At first, the flagellants were tolerated by the Catholic Church, and then monks and priests also participated. But after 1300, the Church became less and less tolerant, alarmed as she was by the rapid spread of this movement and its excesses. In 1349, Pope Clement VI condemned the flagellants in a papal bull, urging Church leaders to thwart the movement. This was reaffirmed 23 years later by Gregory XI, drawing comparisons with other heretical groups. Finally, the Council of Constance sharply condemned the movement in 1417.

*** The committee could have consulted with "Psychologie des Foules" (Psychology of the Crowd) by Gustave Le Bon. In it, he says: "The arguments of the crowds and those which are capable of influening them are, from a logical point of view, of such an inferior kind that it is only by way of analogy that they can be described as reasoning." (3,2) And also: "Civilisations as yet have only been created and directed by a small intellectual aristocracy, never by crowds. Crowds are only powerful for destruction. Their rule is always tantamount to a barbarian phase. A civilisation involves fixed rules, discipline, a passing from the instinctive to the rational state, forethought for the future, an elevated degree of culture – all of them conditions that crowds, left to themselves, have invariably shown themselves incapable of realising." (Introduction)**

APPENDIX 10

Modern Biblical Criticism

This article will provide a brief outline of the historical development of modern Bible criticism and what that entails. The emphasis is on Catholicism, but much of what is being discussed here has not left Protetantism untouched. It is all the more topical now that the great ecumenical movement has started following the initiatives developed by Pope Francis. Unfortunately, this Pope is a full fledged Modernist and a true follower of the heretic Spinoza.

A short historical overview

Modern biblical criticism is one of the fruits of Modernism, a direction against which the Catholic Church has fought fiercely, culminating in the encyclical of Pope Pius X from 1907, called Pascendi, of which a more readable version appeared the following year as "The Catechism of Theological Modernism". After the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), Modernism quickly gained ground and it nowadays beats the drum.

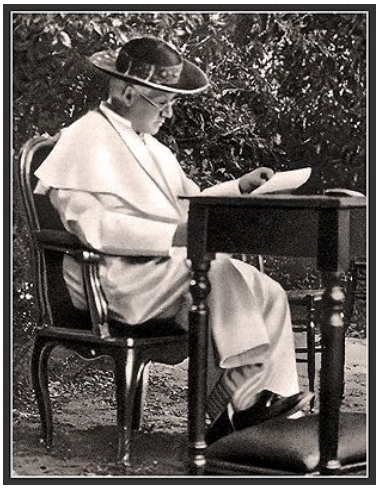
Let it not be a secret, the signs do not deceive, the end of time is approaching as a prelude to the Kingdom of Peace, preceded by Jesus' coming in glory. The signs of his glorious return are described in the Holy Scriptures, in the Gospels, and in the letters of both the apostles Peter and Paul. The first Biblical sign of these events is the spreading of errors that leads to the loss of faith among Christians and their foremen. These errors are promoted by false teachers, by renowned theologians who no longer teach the truth of the Gospel, but misuse their stage for proclaiming pernicious teachings based on false human considerations. This type of teaching causes many people to lose their faith. The Second Peter Letter says: (2 Petr. 2:1-3)

«« But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not. »»

The Father of Modern Biblical Criticism is Spinoza (1632-1677). Its principles are set out in the "Tractatus Theologico Politicus", which he published anonymously in 1670. It was at first well-received, but caused a storm of protests later on. In it Spinoza put forth his most systematic critique of Judaism and organized religion in general. He rejected the idea that there were such things as prophecy and the supernatural, which means that God and nature are the same. Moreover, he categorically rejected God as having any purpose in mind. Spinoza was good friends with the French priest Richard Simon (1638-1712). Simon was fond to call himself a Spinozist. He defended the Tractatus and poured scorn on everyone who criticized it. Simon's epoch making book "Histoire critique du Nouveau Testament" (Historical Criticism of the New Testament) was written in the vein of the Tractatus and was to be published one year after Spinoza's death, in 1678. By a decree of the Royal Council of France the whole edition of 1,300 books was seized and destroyed, but one copy survived and was soon reprinted in Amsterdam. Richard Simon was head of the Rosicrucians and would be succeeded by James Anderson who transformed the movement in 1717 into what we know as Freemasonry.

Catholic doctrine tells us that the primary duty of charity does not lie in the toleration of false ideas, however sincere they may be, nor in the theoretical or practical indifference towards the errors and vices in which we see our brethren plunged. (...) Further, whilst Jesus was kind to sinners and to those who went astray, He did not respect their false ideas, how-ver sincere they might have appeared. He loved them all, but He instructed them in order to convert them and save them.

Paus Pius X: "Our Apostolic Mandate", August 25, 1910



What is Modernism?

A remarkable step on the way to breaking down our faith was the small synod of Pistoia in Italy from 1786. This synod, on the eve of the French Revolution, was remarkable because it introduced a number of novelties behind the smokescreen of a very ambiguous language, which happens to be the trademark also of Vatican II. 1786 can be seen as the birth year of Modernism, although still in its infancy. In his constitution Auctorem Fidei (to protect the faith) Pope Pius VI condemned the 85 theses of this synod and wrote in his introduction:

«« In order not to shock the ears of Catholics, the innovators sought to hide the subtleties of their tortuous maneuvers by the use of seemingly innocuous words such as would allow them to insinuate error into souls in the most gentle manner. Once

> the truth had been compromised, they could, by means of slight changes or additions in phraseology, distort the confession of the faith that is necessary for our salvation, and lead the faithful by subtle errors to their eternal damnation. This manner of dissimulating and lying is vicious, regardless of the circumstances under which it is used. For very good reasons it can never be tolerated in a synod of which the principal glory consists above all in teaching the truth with clarity, whereby (thanks to a careful use of language) every danger of wrong interpretation is excluded. »»

Pascendi the Modernism is described as follows: *"And now if one looks at their whole system with one glance, who will be surprised that we characterize this as the accumulation of all heresies?"* While earlier heresies attacked one or more truths of faith, with the instigators usually leaving the church to establish one themselves, Modernism practically rejects the entire Christian teaching; it even questions or disregards the existence of a personal God. According to Modernism, our idea of God stems from the shadowy religious sentiment of man and does not arise from an objective truth. The formulas used to express a religious truth have been watered down to purely symbolic statements. We can see how this makes itself felt if we take a leap into history. About five years after the Council, around 1970, the KASKI (social church institute) of the Radboud University conducted a survey among the priests in the city center of The Hague. And what did they find? For almost everyone – the exceptions were so rare that they were not included in the outcome of the survey – God had ceased to have meaning in their lives; He had not become much more than a name far away on the horizon.

A sign on the wall is that the false teachers are currently in the bosom of the Church itself and refuse to leave. Pius X, the writer of Pascendi, starts his analysis:

> «« The office divinely committed to us of feeding the Lord's flock has especially this duty assigned to it by Christ, namely, to guard with the greatest vigilance the deposit of the faith delivered to the saints, rejecting the profane novelties of words and oppositions of knowledge falsely so called. There has never been a time when this watchfulness of the supreme pastor was not necessary to the Catholic body; for, owing to the efforts of the enemy of the human race, there have never been lacking men speaking perverse things (Acts 20:30), vain talkers and seducers (Tit. 1:10), erring and driving into error (2 Tim. 3:13). Still it must be confessed that the number of the enemies of the Cross of Christ has in these last days (thus in the beginning of the 20th century) increased exceedingly, who are striving, by arts, entirely new and full of subtlety, to destroy the vital energy of the Church, and, if they can, to overthrow utterly Christ's kingdom itself. »»

Textual Criticism

If we speak of the Bible, we speak of the gift of revelation par excellence. It is therefore important to find out what the Modernist thinks about it. He believes that the religious feeling, as it manifests itself to the consciousness, is a revelation if not the beginning of revelation. Truly, he says, can 'God' as 'it' communicates itself to the soul – albeit extremely vague – not have the same religious significance as the gift of revelation? And further: Since God is both the purpose and the beginning of faith, this revelation implies that the revealed and the revealer, that we tend to call God, are identical. From this bizarre representation of affairs it follows that every religion must be viewed from the perspective applicable to this religion for both the natural and supernatural aspects. It follows that truly every religion deserves our respect! This also leads to the extremely strange conclusion that in matters of faith the only objective measure is the subjective.

In this process, from which, according to the Modernist, faith and revelation originate, one must pay particular attention to the implications of this for the 'textual criticism'. Textual criticism tries to find out the exact origin of a textual tradition, assuming that a text from antiquity has been corrupted over time. That is a bold and unproven statement in regard to the Bible. Would the divine author not see to it that his own text is safeguarded? Textual criticism is also concerned with whether the designated author is the true one. Perhaps, it is supposed, the work is a composition of more than one author that has been strung together so that it seems that there is just one author. With this important weapon from the Modernist arsenal, they want to unravel what would have been stated in the original Biblical manuscripts, and accordingly, it turns out to be very little. Of course, everything else, which is not considered authentic, would have been added later and by other authors, who were victims of their excessive imagination. The divine inspiration is thus put aside.

To explain how the Bible has been expanded through folkoric fantasies, the Modernists use the 'enthousiastic impuls' principle (Begeisterung): through faith, the phenomenon transcends its own reality. By means of an enthousiastic impuls, faith makes every effort to adapt the phenomenon to the alleged divine essence. This is followed by a deformation because the belief, which withdraws the phenomenon from time and space, assigns to it certain qualities that it essentially does not possess. A simple example will clearly state the matter. In the person of Jesus Christ, they say, scientific historical research only discovers a 'man', and must limit herself to that: from a historical perspective, one should try to avoid any appearance of divinity, is the credo. Pascendi first refers to agnosticism, which is the doctrine of not being able to know the deeper reality of things. The agnostic claims that God's existence cannot be deduced from the visible things – Paul writes quite the opposite at the beginning of the Romans letter. The consequence of this is that there are no reasonable arguments within this system for believing in the Biblical God, and it naturally follows that miracles and prophecies are considered unreal. The divine does exist, according to the agnostic, but nothing else can be said about it, because God does not communicate himself directly to man. According to the first effect just discussed, the historical Jesus is transfigured by faith. If one wants to get to know the real Jesus according to this premise, one should remove everything from the Biblical account that lifts Him above the historical factuality. After all, the figure of Jesus as He existed during his life was deformed by faith. Because of the second effect, therefore, all words and actions must be deleted from the Biblical account, yes, everything that does not fit with His character, His living conditions and upbringing, in accordance with the prevailing environmental factors. Only through that way would it be possible to get to know the historical or 'true Jesus' as being a person among the people and from the people. With this idiotic presentation of things, these theologians even dare to call themselves believers!

The extreme contempt for Holy Scripture also shows itself differently. The Modernists believe that certain arguments contained therein do not make sense because there is no rational basis for them, as with the usual references to prophecy. Because in their view prophecies cannot exist, there is no need to pay attention to them in terms of a realistic future-predicting value. Since realist prophecies are impossible in the eyes of the Modernist apologists, they interpret them as 'life-justified' artifacts that are expedient for the service of preaching. In that sense, a prophecy reflects a desired tendency, a praiseworthy endeavor, which, in a high literary language, offers believers a template for a reality yet to be born, which is thereby being 'made'. Because people want something, a well-known saying goes, it will happen. Regarding Christ's coming, when He appeared two thousand years ago, they acknowledge, more assuringly 'know', that He was apparently mistaken in determining the time when the Kingdom of God was to take shape on earth. In

prophetic terms, this was an anachronism. To dare say that Jesus Christ was mistaken and was a prophetic anachronism! That is the impudence at its best. Yet they see nothing surprising in it because, they say, He was also subject to the laws of life! They admit that He was an exceptional person but nevertheless He remained human. If these were only a few to think like that, we could still live with it, but these views have taken hold like a virulent infectious disease!

Regarding the relation between faith and science, Modernists foster the idea that there can never be a clash between faith and science because each forges its way within its own domain. According to the historian, speaking in his scientific jargon, Jesus Christ only lives within the objective historicity. As far as the believer is concerned, Jesus Christ only lives in a faith-created-reality, a virtual reality not a real one. The Modernist wants to ignore that objective historical research shows otherwise, or he will reject that with great aplomb. Furthermore, the Modernist says: "Because those areas are methodically separated from each other, in order to be consistent, we have to conclude that they can never meet each other, and so there can never be an unsolvable conflict. It is certainly true that there are divine manifestations that belong to the world of phenomena, but when, at a later stage, there is a transfiguration and they become part of the faith in a new attire, they have been withdrawn from the sensory world and have thereby become unscientific." It goes without saying, says the Modernist, that when faith deals with supposed sensory manifestations, it has to submit to the laws, supervision and judgment of scientific historical research.

On the basis of the foregoing, it goes without saying that the Modernist has only one answer, and that is that those things could never have existed, while based on contemporary and trustworthy testimonies, which have been carefully recorded, a wise Christian can only come to one conclusion: yeah, those things and many more are historical facts that have actually occurred! And this explains why the believer not only has to believe, but he may also know that his belief is reasonably substantiated.

More clarity about the Modernist thinking emerges from their attitude. If you listen to them, one might think that they contradict themselves, that they are hesitant and uncertain, but that is by no means the case. The deciding factor is that they see a radical separation between the two fields of faith and science. As a result, it seems that they have a split personality because sometimes the 'believer' is speaking and at another time the 'pure rationalist', while they are expressions of one and the same person. If they study the religious facts as a history, the Modernists forego any mention of the deity of Jesus Christ. That would be irrelevant. But when they climb the pulpit, they fully agree to his divinity. Their methodology results in the destruction of steadfast religion, resulting in the Atheistic rationalistic thinking under the veil of religion or, on the other side of the spectrum, idolatrous paganism. A very sad affair!

Causes of the Decline

Why does God allow this decline to happen? *"Because they did not welcome and love the truth."* (2 Thes. 2:10) That is a truth that we experience every time we humans want to point out the simple Evangelical truths and the fact that we are now living in the time the Book of Revelation talks about. When told, people close their ears and refuse to continue talking, not always, but quite often. And why is it that love of the truth is missing? The encyclical Pascendi of Pius X answers that. He sees inappropriate thinking as the cause of the horror, further defined as abnormal curiosity and pride. He identifies intellectualism as the second important cause. Normal curiosity is healthy, the Pope thinks, but it should not

derail. The Pope then quotes his predecessor Pope Gregory XVI (1831-1846) from his encyclical "Singulare Nos" (§ 8):

> «« How deplorable to see how much the ravings of human reason extend when somebody indulges in the unrestrained desire for innovation! Against the advice of the apostle it is wrong to want to know more than one is entitled to. There you will find those who are overconfident in seeking the absolute truth outside the Catholic Church, in which it is, as always, without even a slight tarnish of error. »»

But Pius X thinks that pride is even worse than an exaggerated curiosity. Yes, there is no faster and more direct way to Modernism than haughty pride. It is pride, nothing else than pride, which exerts an incomparable influence on the soul, a condition which leads to a constriction of feeling and blinds the mind. Like a hen with her chicks, pride strolls on the farmyard; how could it be otherwise? She shows off all her feathers. No part of the Modernist doctrine is protected from this. And then his holyness the Pope gives a further explanation of what this kind of pride means:

> «« It is pride which fills Modernists with that confidence in themselves and leads them to hold themselves up as the rule for all, pride that puffs them up with that vainglory which allows them to regard themselves as the sole possessors of knowledge, and makes them say, inflated with presumption: 'We are not as the rest of men.' To prove that they are not as other men, they embrace all kinds of the most absurd novelties; it is pride which rouses in them the spirit of disobedience and causes them to demand a compromise between authority and liberty; it is pride that makes of them the reformers of others, whilst they forget to reform themselves, and which begets their absolute want of respect for authority, not excepting the supreme authority. »»

Finally the Pope remarks: *"When a Catholic laymen, even more so a priest, forgets that precept of the Christian life which obliges us to renounce ourselves in following Jesus Christ, and neglects to tear pride from his heart, ah!, he is a fully ripe subject for the errors of Modernism. If someone does not know how to embrace Christ as his Savior in need, does not banish pride from his heart, it would be amazing if it were different."* After having discussed inappropriate thinking as the cause of decay, the Pope further discusses the nature of intellectualism, which is the intronization of reason, a new god. He thus says: *"It is by the lack of knowledge that one perishes, with an exclusive focus on the alleged sublime of one's own intellectual accomplishments."* According to the Modernist, knowledge resides in reasonable thinking. Such a person is rightfully called a rationalist. A rationalist is someone who relies solely on his own perception and understanding. He sees man as body and mind, but man is more than that; is a union of mind, soul and body; the mind is only one of the faculties of the soul, albeit a very important one. Because of the intimate union of soul and body, it seems as if the mind is only in the brains. But a spirit being, like an angel, knows how to think, doesn't he? And yet has no brains.

Despite their lack of knowledge, the Modernists like to show off as church teachers so that people can start to respect them. They praise modern philosophy and look contemptuously at traditional scholastic teachings (Thomas Aquinas' philosophical system). Deceived by deceptive appearances, the Modernists have only embraced the first while they remained ignorant of the other that they have maligned for no apparent reason. That is why they lack the required insight and dialectical talent to unravel confused logic and to stop fallacies. In conclusion, the Pope points out that the entire system and all its erring ways originated from a union between theology and modern philosophy, which is essentially heretic.

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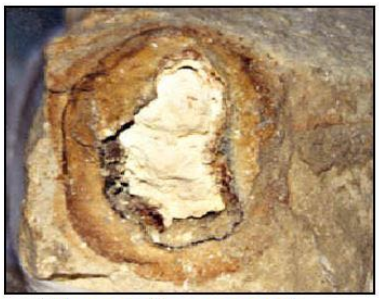
The Historicity of the Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah

Region near Mount Sodom south-west of the Dead Sea

"We will destroy this place because the outcry against them has grown great before the face of the Lord, and the Lord has sent us to destroy it." (Gen. 19:13) Have not our sins, crying to heaven, become far worse than those of Sodom and Gomorrah? God's avenging hand lies heavy but - the Lord be praised - we have a defender in Jesus. Fortunately too there is a flock of faithful Christians, a small remnant, who offer their efforts and prayers as a sweet-smelling sacrifice to God and in this way buy time for us. At present we are still living in a time of mercy. The disasters presented to us in the Biblical visions can be averted. Convert us Lord, so that we may turn back to You! Great and long-suffering God, take care of us! The current generation can search their hearts and thus be saved from suffering and disaster, not just for their own sins but also for those of their fathers. In line with this solution, the prophets of the Exile (Daniel, Ezra and Nehemiah) confessed the sins of their people, each prophet doing so in the ninth chapter of the respective books – and thus these are known as the 999-Prayers. When salvation came, He showed compassion to thousands. Just imagine what it would be if the government were to call on us to humble ourselves with the same words as the 999-Prayers! I know some guys who have been praying for years for this to happen… Calamities and the approaching natural disasters are like so many signs for us to turn back to God. Thus: "Convert us, Lord!"



With thanks to Wyatt Archeological Research (www.wyattmuseum.com)

The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, once situated at the bottom of the Dead Sea, is told in the Bible as a lesson for future generations. And it is not just a story. I realised this when I read "The Exodus Case" by Dr Lennart Möller, that was published at the turn of the century. At the time he was involved in highly qualified medical research at the Karolinska Institute in Sweden. Möller's approach is based on the findings of the American archaeologist Ronald E. Wyatt, who has gained his specialist knowledge due to more than a hundred private expeditions in the Middle East. Although the main theme of the book is Israel's escape from the land of Egypt, Lennart Möller also deals with aspects of the pre-Exodus period. He examines indications that Sodom and Gomorra have indeed been destroyed by fire from the heavens.

The area where the cities once stood is scattered with enormous quantities of balls of sulphur that occur nowhere else in the world in this form. Once cannot escape the impression that the region was once attacked with a hellish rain of sulphur. It is justified to assume that the balls of sulphur were encapsulated in plaster and limestone after hitting the ground, the fire being extinguished by lack of oxygen. If broken open, they can easily burst into flame again. Even scattered skeletons have been found, their shape and chemical composition pointing to partial cremation at extremely high temperatures. There are also indirect indications of human settlements, indirect because there cannot have been much left of the limestone, from which the houses were made, after the bombardment.

One really did not have to be a genius to interpret the indications. A feeling of indignation arises when you think of all the time that there has been silence over this. What is wrong with our university archaeologists that they have to look down on anything to do with the Bible? Are they afraid of accusations of not being scientific and of being refused access to publication in the scientific literature? Or is there an internal blockage, an aversion towards 'that old time religion'? Science may well be objective, but scientists do not have to be. The balls of sulphur prove that the Biblical story of Sodom and Gomorrah recounts exactly what happened. It ends with: *"And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow."* That the story is true, is a source of hope for all people in search of God.

There is an earlier instance of a serious enquiry to the Dead Sea region in a joint venture by the American School of Oriental Research (ASOR) and the Pittsburgh-Xenia Theolo-

gical Seminary, which came to be known as the Albright & Kyle Expedition. In 1924, the well known archaeologist William Albright agreed to set out for a search for the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, together with Melvin Kyle. It was at the instigation of Kyle, who largely financed the expedition. The Fleming H. Revell Company, a prominent publishing house for Evangelicals, has issued both Albright's and Kyle's account of the exploration campaign.[53)]

Fecit John Martin 1852

They excavated Bab edh-Dhra and Numeira on the Jordanian side of the Dead Sea at its south-east end, on top of a plateau, called the Tell Beit Mirsim, some 500 feet above the low-lying lands, at a different place then where Ronald Wyatt has found indications from settlements made from chalk that have totally been destroyed by brimstone. The site of Bab edh-Dhra was in the first instance placed by the Albright & Kyle Expedition in connection with Sodom and Gomorrah, known as the 'cities of the plain'. Albright conjectured that Bab edh-Dhra served as a ceremonial site for Sodom and Gomorrah and adjacent towns and that the ruins of these are probably situated under the shallow waters of the southern Dead Sea basin. After Albright and Kyle had uncovered Bab edh-Dhra and Numeira in 1924, they understood immediately that they were no candidates for Sodom and Gomorrah or any habitation of the 'plain'. William Albright recorded his findings: [54)]

> «« Bab edh-Dhra is most emphatically not a city, but rather a temporary encampment, like Gilgal, or perhaps rather like the somewhat shadowy Baal-Peor of Moab. Since the plain of Bab edh-Dhra is not suitable for cultivation, and is high above the gorge

53) The discussion of the Albright & Kyle expedition has been reproduced several times ad verbatim from: "Some Notes on Sodom & Gomorrah" by Mary Nell Wyatt (Newsletter No. 8 from 1994), as well as from: "Fervent Heat , Sodom and Gomorrah - Exploring the Cities of the Plain" by Richard Rives - Wyatt Archaeological Research, Tennessee # 2010.

54) "The Archaeology of Palestine and the Bible" by William Foxwell Albright - Fleming H. Revell Co., New York # 1932 (p. 136).

> of the Seil edh-Dhra, it would in any case be a very unsatisfactory place for a town. As a festival site for the inhabitants of the oases below it is admirable, since it is situated on the first convenient rise of terrain above the central oasis of el-Mezra'ah, some five hundred feet above the level of the Dead Sea. »»

Melvin Kyle, in his book on the exploration of the area, wrote: [55)]

> «« Now, brimstone is brimstone, even though used in a miracle. And a region on which brimstone was rained will show brimstone. Well, it does; we picked up pure sulfur, in pieces as big as the end of my thumb. It is mixed with the marl of the mountains on the west side of the sea, and now is to be found scattered along the shore of the sea even on the east side, some four or five miles distant from the ledge that contains the stratum. It has somehow scattered far and wide over this Plain. »»

These sites show evidence of being burned, but they are NOT ash, as the Bible indicates how Sodom and Gomorrah must have looked like after being hit. Actually, there is a tremendous amount of artefacts present at Bab edh-Dhra and Numeira, including carbonized grapes still in their skins. The second reason why these sites do not qualify as candidates for the 'cities of the plain' is their size: the largest, Bab edh-Dhra is just 10 acres, while Numeira is only 2! Not large enough to even qualify as small towns. The cemetary at Bab edh-Dhra is said to contain over 20,000 graves which hold over 500,000 corpses. That these high places served as cemeteries for the 'cities of the plain' could well be possible. With the cities completely destroyed, perhaps God allowed their cemeteries on high places to remain as a testimony that fairly large population once lived in the area below.

Dr. Kyle and his expedition members were looking for the sites at the southern end of the Dead Sea, based not on fact but on popular conception. Yet, they passed right by the true sites. Why didn't they notice them? Says Rives: *"Perhaps it just wasn't God's time."*

Pieter Breughel the elder

55) "Explorations at Sodom: The Story of Sodom in the Light of Modern Research" by Dr. Melvin Grove Kyle - Fleming H. Revell Co. # 1928 (pp. 52-53)

The Historicity of the Exodus

The Exodus and the 40-year trek through the desert is a scientifically proven fact of something that really happened.

Egypt, the Sini and the Northeren Hegaz (from left to right)

Based on the most recent discoveries, as discussed in the writings of Lennart Möller's "The Exodus Case", we are going to deal with the historicity of the Exodus. Historicity deals with the question: 'Did this really happened?' First we pay a visit to the region where the wanderings through the desert took place, then some facts are presented about the pre-Exodus period, followed by a determination of the exact site where God handed over the Ten Commandments. Finally we focus on the findings from that period in ancient Egypt itself, which gives interesting clues for the Biblical narration.

2.1 – Official doubts about the historicity of the Exodus narrative

As regards the Bible as an historical book I would like to draw your attention to the exodus from Egypt, in the short the Exodus. Archeology professor Carol Redmount writes in the authoritative "Oxford History of the Biblical World" from 1998 :

> «« The historicity of the Exodus narrative is a complex issue. Clearly, significant portions are not and were never intended to be historiographic. Yet the overall intent of the narrative was historical, despite nonhistorical elements in its compilation.
> In this context it is important to remember that the biblical writers' conception of history, particularly within what was primarily a theological document, differed from our own. (…) The biblical Exodus account was never intended to function or to be understood as history in the present-day sense of the word. Traditional history,

with its stress on objectivity and verifiable, detailed facts as the building blocks of historical understanding, is a modern obsession.

(She then concludes:) The biblical text has its own inner logic and consistency, largely divorced from the concerns of secular history. Over time, various hands shaped and edited the biblical narrative, combining and blending different sources and literary categories according to theological truths rather than historical imperatives. Historiographic methods alone can never do full justice to the spiritually informed biblical material; conversely, the Bible, never intended to function primarily as a historical document, cannot meet modern Canons of historical accuracy and reliability. There is, in fact, remarkably little of proven or provable historical worth or reliability in the biblical Exodus narrative, and no reliable independent witnesses attest to the historicity or date of the Exodus events. »»

She thus formulates the prevailing opinion and unfortunate disposition of the scientific establishment, to which I like to add Ian Wilson's comments from 1999 in "The Bible as History" :

«« Near the end of the 19th century, the pioneering British archæologist Sir Flinders Petrie made a fascinating discovery at Serabit el-Khadem. He found a series of inscriptions in a curious and interesting-looking pictographic-alphabetic script dating, apparently, from around 1500 BC - that is, the very time, according to our reconstruction, of the biblical wanderings in the wilderness. The inscriptions were found on a sandstone sphinx now in the British Museum, and on a number of other statues as well as rock faces in the vicinity. Their most intriguing feature is that, although written in pictorgraphs which are manifestly based on Egyptian hieroglyphs, the language itself is Semitic-Canaanite, the very tongue that Moses and his followers would have spoken.

Scholars generally agree that this so-called Proto-Sinaitic script was the direct ancestor of both written Hebrew and our own alphabet. Obviously, given the still tentative dating of the Exodus to the late 16th or early 15th century BC, it would be optimistic in the extreme to claim that these inscriptions were written by Moses and his followers. Nor is there any sign of Yahwism, for some refer to Ba'lat, 'the Lady', denoting the Canaanite goddess Astarte/Ashtoreth.

(And elsewhere:) If an Exodus dated around the Ramesses II era is accepted, the conquest of Canaan would have happened at the end of the Late Bronze Age, i.e. around 1200 BC or later. If this were the case, there can be no doubt, archæologically, that the high-ramparted, walled cities biblically described as confronting Joshua and his men would have presented no obstacle at all. For by then their walls had already long since gone. They had been tumbled back in the late 16th and 15th centuries BC. According to the conventional wisdom, this was the work of Egypt's 18th Dynasty Pharaohs, who vigorously reduced Canaan to an Egyptian colony in order to make sure that the Canaanites would never invade them again. It is important, therefore, to proceed carefully, avoiding assumptions and trying to set the events, if indeed they happened at all, in their historical and geographical setting. »»

2.2 – Some arguments for a dating of the Exodus

After this scandalous argument, let us now ponder the facts. Panin, who made his biblical chronology based on the internal logic of the biblical text, situates the Exodus in the period of 1468 to 1428 BC, thus in the 15th century before Christ, which perfectly agrees with the findings of Flinders Petrie, who is sometimes called the father of Palestinian Archæology. It proves that the conventional wisdom – that the destruction of the walls of Jericho was the work of the Pharaohs – is wrong. How could it be optimistic in the extreme to claim that these inscriptions were written by Moses and his followers? Carol Redmount says: *"The hypothesis dating the Exodus to the mid-sixteenth century puts paramount importance on historical data and relies the least on biblical narrative."* She continues: *"The second hypothesis dates the Exodus to the fifteenth century BC and stems from a literal reading of the biblical narrative."* This would agree with the position of eminent scholar James Hoffmeier,[56)] who concludes on the basis of epigraphic evidence and data from recent excavations in Egypt: *"Despite the problem of placing the Genesis Patriarchs in a precise historical context, and even a denial by some scholars that these figures ever existed, they seem to fill in a period covering the nineteenth through mid-sixteenth centuries, a range followed by scholars who accept the essential historicity of Genesis."* So far as concerns the dating of the Exodus.

2.3 – Discoveries of Hebrew inscriptions from the Exodus period

Now I would like to discuss the fascinating finds made by Sir Flinders Petrie (1853-1942), on display in the British Museum, which are a few specimen that belong to a very large

56) "Israel in Egypt (the evidence for the authenticity of the Exodus tradition)" by James K. Hoffmeier - Oxford University Press # 1996 (p. 68).

number of epigraphs and graffiti in at least seven Wadis plus a mountain, the Serabit el-Khadem, that are all located on the Western side of the Sinai Peninsula closest to Egypt. The el-Khadem site, that was visited by Petrie, contains a large graveyard with inscriptions and is situated in a barren inaccessible region that in the 19th century was still called by the Arabs the 'Turbet es Yahoud' or 'graves of the Jews'. While the Egyptians always buried their dead in the plain or in a valley, this extensive graveyard sits on the top a 700 foot high mountain. The work involved in bringing the bodies here for burial would have been large, but this is not uncommon for the Israelites. Who else would be buried here on a desolate mountain in the Sinai except for those ancient Israelites killed by the wrath of God? This was discovered by Carsten Niebuhr (not his son Barthold) in 1761, 8 years after the excentric Irish bishop Robert Clayton made his discovery of similar inscriptions on rocks and cliffs at one of the Wadis, then reported in the Journal of the Franciscans of Cairo. In "Voyage en Arabie" (Travel to Arabia) Niebuhr refers to Cosmas, surnamed Indicopleustes (Indian navigator), who recorded these graves and their inscriptions in the middle of the 6th century. Cosmas is one of the most valuable geographical writers of antiquity. He was an acute observer and vivid describer and his good faith is unquestionable. His observation, proven to be correct by the linguistic research of the 19th century, is that the inscriptions were the work of the Israelites exercising themselves during their stay in the wilderness in their newly acquired art of writing, and thus followed with the ardour of a new student in a quiet school. Niebuhr noted that the tomb inscriptions contained no mention of any of the Egyptian gods that are found on virtually all Egyptian tombs, and he was astonished at the wonderful preservation of the inscriptions upon the 'soft sandstone' some of them quite perfect, exposed as they were to the sun, the air and the ravages of heavy storms during the lapse of more than three millenia.

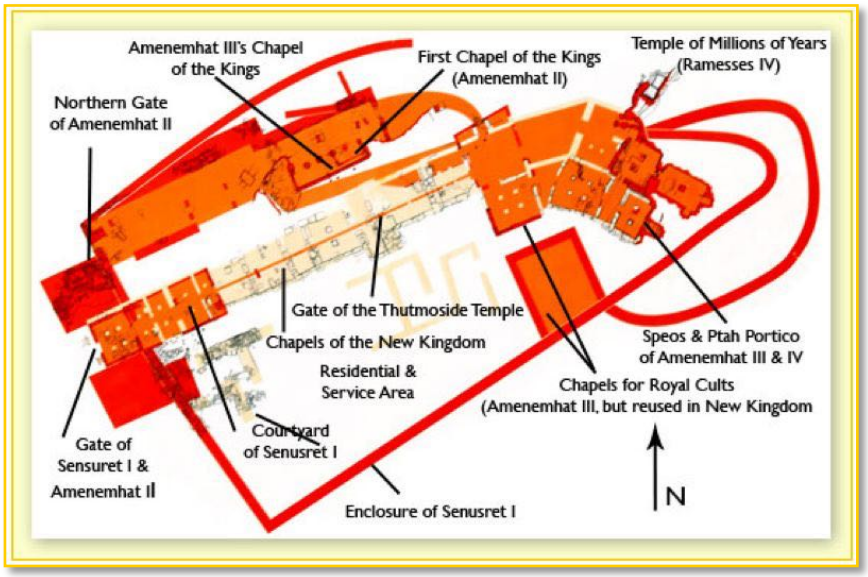
This is astonishing, to say the least. I know nothing of the exact conditions of the Serabit el-Khadem (shown in The Times Atlas of the World) and elsewhere in this desert environment, but every photograph I have seen in a picture atlas of the Sinai desert makes me suspect - which is no more than a guess - the highly corrosive effects of the natural Sinai environment. If so, God may have wanted to preserve the weather-beaten graveyard and its inscriptions, and the Exodus sandstone inscriptions engraved elsewhere, as proof of the veracity of the Biblical narrative, here described in Numbers when God struck the people after they had devoured the quails (Num. 11:34): *"So they called the name of that place Graves of Craving (Kibroth Hattaavah), because there they buried the people who had yielded to craving."* Sandstone could be the rock-equivalent of the ayate fibre used for the cloth bearing the miraculous picture of the Virgin of Guadalupe in Mexico, now 470 years

old, which inexplicably has been preserved throughout the ages [57)], while ayate normally rots away in twenty years. And this is not such an odd comparison for is not it twice said that the garments of the people of God did not wear out during their stay in the desert? (Deut. 8:4; 29:5) Niebuhr found numerous engravings of quails in the cemetery. The tombstones actually depict these birds standing, flying and apparently even trussed and cooked, as can be seen in Charles Forster's book of 1862, "Sinai Photographed". Dr Stewart made many plaster casts or squeezes that were brought to England. They were later photographed or etched and appear in Reverend Forster's book.[58)] The inscriptions record that the Israelites succumbed to gluttony in eating the quails that God had miraculously provided, as translated on page 84: *"The apostates smitten with disease by God, by means of feathered fowls. Smitten by God with disease in the sandy plain (when) exceeding the bounds of moderation. Sickening, smitten by God with disease; their marrow corrupted by God by means of the feathered fowls. The people, given over to destruction, cry aloud. God pours down deep sleep, messenger of death, upon the pilgrims. The tomb is*

57) There exists extensive scientific documentation on the astounding observation that the image of the blessed Virgin of Guadalope shows no signs of wear whatsoever.

58) The first edition of "Sinai Photographed" contains Forster's careful analysis of materials collected by the specially commissioned Sinai expedition of Captain Henry Thomas Butler and his brother Reverend Pierce Butler as well as those collected by Dr Stewart at the Turbet es Yahoud. The work also contains over 100 etchings using a process then known as glyphography to capture with great exactitude inscriptions preserved in casts under the direction of professor Pierre Victorian Lottin de Laval on his expedition to the Sinai, some pictures of which appeared in his "Voyage dans la péninsule arabique du Sinai et l'Egypt émoyenne, 1855-59" (Voyage in the Arabic Peninsula of the Sinai and the outer Egyptian region). In particular, Forster's study features the first published albumen photographs of ancient Hebrew writing. These 18 original mounted albumen photographs by British photographer A. J. Brown show inscriptions preserved in the casts made in the Sinai by Lottin de Laval and those from the Butler expedition.

the end of life to the sick, smitten with disease by God." The translation could be checked with a trilingual inscription, shown in the photo section of the book, that in 1860 was found in a cave on the Maghara mountain by Pierce Butler, which lies 18 kilometers South of the Serabit el-Khadem.



I want to turn back to the unsubstantiated remarks by Ian Wilson. First: it can be doubted whether the artefacts brought home by Petrie from the Serabit el-Khadem are representative. Probably they were taken away because they were very exceptional, just like the famous Pharaoh Merneptah Stela which Petrie found in Thebes and that is dated to the late 13th century, the time of Gideon, which Stela is now on display in Cairo, mentioning the curse: *"Isirar (Israel) is laid waste and his seed is not." Secondly I like to answer Ian Wilson's answer*, already quoted*: "Nor is there any sign of Yahwism, for some (inscriptions) refer to Ba'lat, 'the Lady', denoting the Canaanite goddess Astarte/Ashtoreth."* If we accept that this inscription, found in the temple of Serabit, translates into Ba'lat or Baalat,[59)] which is the feminine form of Baal, it does not necessarily mean that it is the 'Canaanite' goddess Astarte. Because the term was also used as from the middle third millennium BC in Akkadian and Ugarit as an epithet, signifying mistress, lady or sovereign (DDD dict.). Thus the inscription in the Temple of Serabit proves nothing regarding the land of Canaan in particular, and it could very well have agreed with the concept of Shekina in the meaning of God's consort.[60)] Like Shekina, Baalath could also have been

59) The translation offered of the inscription at the temple at Serabit el-Khadem is tenuous, to say the least. Fernand Crombette, in his discussion on the Phaistos Disk, gives an alternative and preferable translation, considering his great expertise in the field. To begin, the monument (shown twice at the temple site) would be in honour of the goddess Ba'lat, the Lady, but it represents a man... The text inscribed in the inferior part reads according to Crombette in the original tongue: "Ça Tou Dja Qou Djo Pha-ra-un Ba-lo-ti (Pharaô N Bal Hoti) Ouôini Têt", transcribed as (Parthey's dictionary): "The seed of Jacob (Joseph), the interpreter of the hidden things of Pharao", which is miles away from the conventional translation.

used to indicate the overt manifestation of God's Glory, as happened with the miraculous Red Sea crossing or the burning bush revelation. The term Baal in the meaning of Lord is used in the Book of Judges after Gideon died, which was in the year 1195, or 234 years after the Exodus. *"As soon as he died the children of Israel again played the harlot with the Baals, and made Baal-Brith their god."* I stress the word again. Here, in Judges (8:33, 9:4), is mention of the masculine form Baal-Brith synonym of El-Brith (9:46), to be rendered as Lord of the Covenant.

Stewart's expedition to the Serabit el-Khadem graveyard was preceded by another important expedition to the Peninsula by professor Lottin de Laval who went elsewhere in the Western part after being commissioned by the French government. The first Exodus inscriptions he found were near a place the Arabs used to call "The Wells of Moses". He took home 300 squeezes of the most important finds, recorded in his book: "Voyage dans la Peninsule arabique du Sinai et l'Egypt émoyenne" (Voyage in the Arabic Peninsula of the Sinai and the outer Egyptian region). In his concluding remarks De Laval writes: *"It is virtually impossible that a people so intelligent, so persevering as that of the Hebrew nation, would not have left in the indelible granite of the Peninsula of Sinai a single monument of their Exodus, as a way to thank God for being able, in the midst of so much misery and danger, to have reached a safe heaven and liberty."* I will end this discussion of the Sinai graffiti with three translations from Forster's book, which is representative of many more of his interesting texts.

Instead of using or modifying the available ancient alphabets, Forster chose to make one of his own. He checked his work with the trilingual inscription from Djebel Maghara, discovered by Pierce Butler. Forster proceeded in steps. He first transliterated many of the inscriptions into Arabic characters and then transliterated them using an Arabic lexicon, but with little regard for the Arabic verb system with its ten forms. The authors of the voluminous "Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum" from 1881 pronounced Forster's work to be silly. The Corpus offers alternative translations by Cantineau, Lidzbarski, Litman, and others, based on the idea that those inscriptions are mainly Nabatean. The Nabateans were a Semitic people of traders. Their first definite appearance was only in 312 BC. I am not in a position to pronounce a verdict on the correct translation method. But I know that many linguists are not favourably disposed to the Bible as Word of God. The "Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum" was an initiative in 1867 by Ernest Renan and was published by the Académie des Inscriptions that stood under his direction from 1881 till the end of his life in 1892. Renan was a great sceptic. His "Life of Jesus" from 1863 was immensely popular and has done great harm to the faith of the common people. In view of his disas-

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60) In origin the term Shekina was used to refer to a divine manifestation, particularly to indicate the overt manifestation of God's Glory. The Shekina has in certain applications, like Jewish tales, a heathen and idolatrous overtone. She is then presented as the wife of God and heavenly queen who is supposed to bring peace on earth. Many a serious student of religion considers her as the female side of God, as his Spirit in exile who is our last refuge in this place of misery. The talmudic language of the Shekina ranges from the numinous revelation of God, as in the theophany at the Horeb, to the more mundane idea that a religious act draws man nearer to God.

trous views we should not expect the Corpus to be in favour of Biblical truths. Those rock engravings offer intriguing views; I am not at all convinced that Forster was wrong.

The inscriptions 10 and 41 were discovered during Dean Arthur Stanley's expedition to Wadi Sidri (thorn) in 1853. In his book from 1856 [61)] when the graffiti had not yet been deciphered, Stanley describes his visit to that place, leading up from the Red Sea:

> «« A stair of rock, the Nukb Badera, brought us into a glorious wadi enclosed between red granite mountains. (…) It was a sight worthy of all remembrance, before we reached this, to see, in the first break of day, the sunbeams striking the various heights of white and red, and to think what an effect this must have had as the vast encampment, dawn by dawn, in these mountains, broke up with the shout (Num. 10:35): *"Rise up, O Lord! Let Your enemies be scattered and let those who hate You flee before You."* In the midst of the Wadi Sidri, just where the granite was exchanged for sandstone, I caught sight of the first inscription. A few more followed up the course of a side valley where we turned up to see [strange sight in that wild region!] Egyptian hieroglyphics and figures carved in the cliffs. (…) Of the other inscriptions, the chief part were in the next valley, Mukatteb, 'of writing', so called from them. »»

General remark on sources used

I started on the track of this article after having read "The Signature of God – Astonishing Biblical Discoveries" by the well known author Grant R. Jeffrey, published by Frontier Research Publ. Toronto (1996). The pertinent chapter in Jeffrey's book is entitled "Ancient Sinai Inscriptions giving historical evidence of the Exodus" (pp. 48-68). Unfortunately I have not been able to find the book of Professor Lottin de Laval, so that the quotes are directly from Jeffrey's chapter. The same can be said of the book of Reverend Charles Forster referred to, which book I am trying to find, but that is no easy matter! Of particular interest to me is the trilingual tablet of which a photograph is found in "The Signature of God". I have in my possession an earlier book of Forster's with a number of inscriptions, the whole title of which is worth mentioning: "The one primeval language traced experimentally through ancient inscriptions in alphabetic characters of lost powers from the four continents, including the voice of Israel from the rocks of Sinai and the vestiges of patriarchal tradition from the monuments of Egypt, Etruria, and Southern Arabia – with illustrative plates, a harmonized table of alphabets, glossaries, and translations" by the Rev. Charles Forster, B.D., one of the six preachers of the Cathedral of Canterbury, and rector of Stisted, Essex; honorary member of the literary society; author of "Mahometanism Unveiled", and of "The Historical Geography of Arabia" – Richard Bentley, London # 1851.

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61) "Sinai and Palestine – in connection with their history" by Arthur Penrhyn Stanley - John Murray, London # 1856; many editions afterwards, this one from 1912 (p. 55). As concerns the "Sinaitic Inscriptions", see note A end part I, with a very interesting and detailed account of the inscriptions found in the Sinai Peninsula.

A general view of the temple site at Serabit el-Khadem

Inscription 10:

The leader divideth asunder the sea, its waves roaring.
The people enter, and pass through the midst of the waters.

Inscription 41:

Moses causeth the people to haste
like a fleet-winged she-ostrich crying aloud.
The cloud shining bright, a mighty army
propelled into the Red Sea, is gathered into one.
They go jumping and skipping,
taking flight from the face of the enemy.
The surge of the sea is divided.

There is also a translation, found at a different Wadi, of the rebellion of Moses' sister Miriam, described in Numbers:

Inscription 48:

Miriam, prophetess of lying lips and a deceitful tongue.
She causes the tribes to conspire
against the pillar and prince of the people.
Convoked for tumult, perverted, full of strife,
the people revile the meek and generous man.
They load with reproaches the blessed one of God.

(Continuation page 120)

APPENDIX 11

Did the Red Sea part? No evidence, archaeologists say

By Michael Slackman
Published: April 3, 2007

INTERNATIONAL Herald Tribune

NORTH SINAI, Egypt : On the eve of Passover, the Jewish holiday that celebrates the story of Moses leading the Israelites through this wilderness out of slavery, Egypt's chief archaeologist took a bus full of journalists into the North Sinai to showcase his agency's latest discovery.

It didn't look like much — some ancient buried walls of a military fort and a few pieces of volcanic lava. The archaeologist, Dr. Zahi Hawass, often promotes mummies and tombs and pharaonic antiquities that command international attention and high ticket prices. But this bleak landscape, broken only by electric pylons, excited him because it provided physical evidence of stories told in hieroglyphics. It was proof of accounts from antiquity.

That prompted a reporter to ask about the Exodus, and if the new evidence was linked in any way to the story of Passover. The archaeological discoveries roughly coincided with the timing of the Israelites' biblical flight from Egypt and the 40 years of wandering the desert in search of the Promised Land. *"Really, it's a myth",* Hawass said of the story of the Exodus, as he stood at the foot of a wall built during what is called the New Kingdom.

Egypt is one of the world's primary warehouses of ancient history. People here joke that wherever you stick a shovel in the ground you find antiquities. When workers built a sewage system in the downtown Cairo neighborhood of Dokki, they accidentally scattered shards of Roman pottery. In the middle-class neighborhood of Heliopolis, tombs have been discovered beneath homes.

But Egypt is also a spiritual center, where for centuries men have searched for the meaning of life. Sometimes the two converge, and sometimes the archaeological record confirms the history of the faithful. Often it does not, however, as Hawass said with detached certainty. *"If they get upset, I don't care",* Hawass said. *"This is my career as an archaeologist. I should tell them the truth. If the people are upset, that is not my problem."*

The story of the Exodus is celebrated as the pivotal moment in the creation of the Jewish people. As the Bible tells it, Moses was born the son of a Jewish slave, who cast him into the Nile in a basket so the baby could escape being killed by the Pharaoh. He was saved

by the Pharaoh's daughter, raised in the royal court, discovered his Jewish roots and, with divine help, led the Jewish people to freedom. Moses is said to have ascended Mt. Sinai, where God appeared in a burning bush and Moses received the Ten Commandments.

In Egypt today, visitors to Mount Sinai are sometimes shown a bush by tour guides and told it is the actual bush that burned before Moses. But archaeologists who have worked here have never turned up evidence to support the account in the Bible, and there is only one archaeological find that even suggests the Jews were ever in Egypt. Books have been written on the topic, but the discussion has, for the most part, remained low-key as the empirically minded have tried not to incite the spiritually minded.

"Sometimes as archaeologists we have to say that never happened because there is no historical evidence", Hawass said, as he led the journalists across a rutted field of stiff and rocky sand. The site was a two-hour drive from Cairo, over the Mubarak Peace Bridge into the Northern Sinai area called Qantara East.

For nearly 10 years, Egyptian archaeologists have scratched away at the soil here, using day laborers from nearby towns to help unearth bits of history. It is a vast expanse of nothingness, a flat desert moonscape. Two human skeletons were recently uncovered, their bones positioned besides pottery and Egyptian scarabs. As archaeological sites go, it is clearly a stepchild to the more sought-after digs in other parts of the country that have revealed treasures of pharaonic times. A barefoot worker in a track suit tried to press through the crowd to get the officials leading the tour to give him his pay, and tramped off angrily when he was rebuffed.

Recently, diggers found evidence of lava from a volcano in the Mediterranean Sea that erupted in 1500 BC and is believed to have killed 35,000 people and wiped out villages in Egypt, Palestine and the Arabian Peninsula, officials here said. The same diggers found evidence of a military fort with four rectangular towers, now considered the oldest fort on the Horus military road.

But nothing was showing up that might help prove the Old Testament story of Moses and the Israelites fleeing Egypt, or wandering in the desert. Hawass said he was not surprised, given the lack of archaeological evidence to date. But even scientists can find room to hold on to beliefs.

"I agree that such a conclusion might disappoint some. People always have doubts until something is discovered to confirm it", he noted. Then he offered another theory, one that he said he drew from modern Egypt. *"A Pharaoh drowned and a whole army was killed",* he said recounting the portion of the story that holds that God parted the Red Sea to allow the Israelites to escape, then closed the waters on the pursuing army*. "This is a crisis for Egypt, and the ancient Egyptians did not document their crises."*

Comment: If one is looking for something and it does not find it in a certain place, the only correct conclusion is that it has been searched in the wrong place and that it must be sought elsewhere. Dr. Zahi Hawass can only have reached his absurd conclusion because he a priori assumed that the Old Testament is not a historically accurate document. Paradoxically, his conclusion provides supporting evidence that the Red Sea of the Miraculous Passage is located off what is now known as the Gulf of Aqaba.

2.4 – The puzzling complex at Saqqara

In the same spirit as the writers of the "Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum", not a single scientist has yet had the obvious idea, repeated by Möller, that the Egyptian 'Imhotep', described as a genius, could well have been the biblical Joseph. This genius, sometimes called the Leonardo da Vinci of antiquity, is carved in stone as the Grand Vizier of Pharaoh Djoser I. He therefore served as a kind of sub-king. All additional circumstances surrounding this monumental figure point to the fact that it must have been the same Joseph who was raised to the highest post in the kingdom thanks to his interpretation of the dream in which the seven thin cows devoured the seven fat ones. His interpretation was that during the years of plentiful harvests stores should be laid down so that the people could survive the periods of famine. For this, one may speculate, in this tropical country gigantic underground silos had to be constructed, that could serve as places of safety for the costly grains. It would seem that nobody previously had the idea, before Möller got involved, that the puzzling complex at Saqqara, designed by Imhotep, met precisely those conditions. Why is this not known? Doubtless part of the problem is that Egyptologists have a tendency to adulate everything connected to their profession. Admittedly, the Bible is sometimes not all that complimentary where Egypt is concerned. A further factor is that the dating of Djoser / Saqqara fails to match the raising of Joseph to his high position in 1716 BC.[62)] The scientific convention would have Djoser reigning between 2630 and 2610 BC, but this is subject to major doubts. For want of something better, it gives Egyptology a useful frame of reference. For want of something better? Why not test secular chronology against Biblical?

Sakkara Silo's

Two verbs are hidden in Joseph's name: 'to take away' (asaph) and 'to add' (yasaph), which are the two sides to Joseph's life: first he was taken away and had to suffer a great deal but later he was to be raised up and add the gift of life. When the Pharaoh raised Joseph to his function he gave him an Egyptian name: Tzafnas Pane'ach. (Gen. 41:45) The 'name' was very important in Egypt at the time and the giver of the name was always greater than the receiver. Thus the Pharaoh wished to say: "You may now wear my seal

62) The chronology showing that the raising of Joseph to his high post occurred in 1716 BC is that developed by an American of Russian origin, Ivan Panin (1855-1942).

ring, but realise that I stand above you". It is also possible that the Egyptians also gave Joseph a second name, such as Imhotep – 'in peace'. Onkelos (ca. 35-120 AD), who interpreted the ancient traditions, says that Tzafnas Pane'ach is a Hebrew expression meaning 'he who uncovers the secrets'. The term also appears to be used in a well-known Jewish prayer. If for this reason it is Hebrew, this does not exclude its origin as Coptic. Some say that the name in Coptic means 'the god speaks and may he live' or 'deliverer of the land'. Although my knowledge is too limited to give a verdict, it would seem that the explanation given by Fernand Crombette, a great expert in the field, comes closer to the truth. According to Parthey's dictionary he arrived at the transcription: 'He who reduced writing to its fundamental elements in order to reveal the basis of sounds' – or, to put it briefly, 'the discoverer of the alphabet'.[63)] The double meaning of, on the one hand, 'he who uncovers the secrets' and, on the other, 'the discoverer of the alphabet'[64)], calls to mind the Hebrew name Mosheh, meaning 'drawn from (the water)'. Nowhere does the (Hebrew) Bible use the name 'Moses' which, in fact, was an Egyptian title.

2.5 – Where was the Red Sea of the miraculous crossing?

In April 2007 the famous Egyptian archaeologist Zahi Hawass caught the attention of the world's press. He was carrying out archaeological investigations in northern part of the Sinaic peninsula and noted that in his work he had as yet found no evidence for the Biblical passsage through the Red Sea, currently known as the Gulf of Suez. And it would, indeed, have been impossible to find such evidence since that is not the place where the people of Israel passed through! The very beginning of their trek, from the land of Goshen, waar de Israëlieten in Egypte verblijf hielden (waar de Nijldelta begint), lead across the plain of the Nile delta, with in those days perhaps a number of shallow reed seas – but no more than that. It was only after a number of weeks that the passage through the Red Sea took place, not far from the 'Mountain of God' which, as we shall see, lies to the east of the Gulf of Aqaba, which in old times was called the Edom Sea or Red Sea.

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63) According to Parthey's dictionary of ancient Coptic: "Vocabularium coptico-latinum..." (Berlin # 1844), Joseph's name in Coptic (the language of the Pharaohs) reads as: Sah-phenk-noc-pa-en-he-kah, or: scribere, reducere, princeps, qui pertinet ad, extrahere, ratio, sonus. In other words: *"He who reduced writing to its basic elements and succeeded in revealing the basis of the sounds"*.

64) The phenomenon of a single name with different meanings occurs, but in a more recent past, in the names Esther and Mordechai. Morodokh is an ordinary Persian name derived from Marduk, a Babylonian god. The Hebrew Mordechai, on the contrary, is a code for 'mor ror' or pure myrrh from Exodus 30:23, pronounced in Aramaic as 'mera dachia' or Mordechai. The match of sounds between the heathen and the Jewish name can have been deliberately chosen to reduce the risk of ridicule and discrimination in the world of the Babylonian exile. This also applies to the Jewish name Esther, meaning 'mystery', a word in which the concept of es(o)ter(ic) is hidden. 'Role of Esther' in Hebrew reads as 'megilat esther' which, translated literally, means 'the unveiling of the hidden'. In Persian, on the contrary, it indicates 'stara', meaning 'star', but it also points to the Babylonian goddess Ishtar. Her original name was Hadassah, meaning myrtle, a bush which belongs with the mother goddess because of its perfume. This could perhaps explain the change of her name in Esther. However, in Jewry the myrtle is used as a decoration during the Feast of Tabernacles.

An interesting passage appears in I Kings 9:26, which beyond any doubt shows where to find the Sof Sea, which is the Hebrew for Red Sea: *"King Solomon built a fleet of ships at Etzion Geber, which is next to Eilat (at the northern point of the Gulf of Aqaba), situated at the Sof Sea in the land of Edom."* Here it is clearly stated that the Sof Sea lies against the land of Edom. The following book from 1878: "The late Dr. Charles Beke's Discoveries of Sinai in Arabia and of Midian", states as concerns the seaport Etzion Geber that it belonged at a later stage to the people of Edom: [65] *"As the Hebrew word Edom means red, the name of this Edom-Sea was, according to the custom of the time, called Red Sea, and this term, though in the first instance belonging to the Gulf of Aqaba alone, became applied to the entire Arabian Gulf, and thence was eventually extended to the seas washing the whole coast of Arabia, and even to the Indian Ocean."* Yam Sof literally means 'Border Sea', sometimes, based on Coptic, translated as a shallow reed or papyrus sea, but that does not fit with the Gulf of Aqaba because that one is too deep. In Yiddish 'sof' means 'bad luck' or 'a critical border case'. The translation of Yam Sof with Red Sea is based on the Septuagint from the 3rd century BC, which is the translation of the Old Testament in the Greek of the common people, the so-called 'koinè'. My good old Hastings "Dictionary of the Bible" from 1909, says under "Red Sea":

> «« Dean Stanley [66] considers that the name as applied to the Gulfs of Suez and Aqaba is comparitively modern, as it was used to designate the waters of the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf before it was applied to the arm which extends northwestwards of the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb; and in the former application it was used by Herodotus and Berossus (a Hellenistic-era Babylonian writer and astronomer), as pointed out by Rawlinson [67] in "Ancient Monarchies" (bk 1, p. 109). Rawlinson says: *"Sayce [68] maintains that Yam Sof, as used by Hebrew writers, means only the Gulf of Aqaba, and that its application in Exodus to the 'sea', near Egypt, which the Israelites would have crossed on leaving Egypt, rests upon a mistake."* This view (…) was adopted by Sayce in order to support his theory that the Biblical Sinai lays (…) east of the Gulf of Aqaba. »»

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65) Under the heading of Sinai, Hastings Dictionary refers Sayce's view to Beke, a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. Charles Tilstone Beke (1800-1874) was a famous British explorer, geographer and Biblical critic. At age 74 he undertook an expedition to the Near East for the purpose of knowing the real position of the Horeb or Biblical Sinai. His journey convinced him that it is situated east of the Gulf of Aqaba. He identified the Horeb with the Jabal an-Nour, literally 'Mountain of Light' or 'Hill of Illumination', which lies near Mecca. He was right that it is located to the east of the Gulf of Aqaba and that there the miraculous crossing took place, but he did not manage to discover its exact location. Shortly after coming back home from this expedition he died and it was his wife who published his findings in 1878 as "The late Dr. Charles Beke's Discoveries of Sinai in Arabia and of Midian". In 2015 it was reprinted by "Scholar Select".

66) Arthur Penrhyn Stanley (1815-1881), known as Dean Stanley, was an English churchman and academic. He was Dean of the Westminster Abbey from 1864 to 1881. He is the author of a number of works on Church History. One of his important works, referred to in the Hastings Dictionary, is "Sinai and Palestine: in connection with their history". Originally published 1856, it is still in print today.

67) "The Seven Great Monarchies of the Ancient Eastern World" by George Rawlinson (1812-1902). The writer was a English scholar, historian, and Christian theologian. Originally published 1875, it is still in print today.

Unfortunately I have to correct the remark of Sayce when he states that in the Bible Yam Sof means only the Gulf of Aqaba, because God stopped the plague of locusts by sending the vermin in the Yam Sof, here also translated by the Septuagint as the Red Sea. (Ex. 10:19) Beyond any doubt this means the Gulf of Suez (as it is now called). To translate this with the term Red Sea is confusing. A better translation would be: *"the wind sent them in the Frontier Sea"*, because that follows the meaning of Yam Sof; the Gulf of Suez indicates the first and most important frontier of the Egyptian residential area; within this context the Gulf of Aqaba lies too far away and this defines the frontier of the sphere of influence, or hegemony, of Egypt. In both cases there is question of a frontier sea.

Before God's people started its outward journey, called exodus, there was first the tough confrontation between Moses and the Pharaoh. This happened long after Joseph had been Viceroy of Egypt, when under his leadership the people was respected, but now things were different. Because, as the Bible says, God hardened Pharaoh's heart,[69] he remained stubborn and would not give in to the demand: "*Let my people go!*". It was only after the Ten Plagues that Pharaoh allowed himself to be persuaded. There is historical material for this episode in the Ipuwer Papyrus dating from the 18th Dynasty or perhaps a little later. It can be seen in the Museum of Antiquities in Leiden.[70] It is a damaged scroll some metres in length, telling how the slaves got their own way and, as also the Bible says, were loaded with gifts.[71] The papyrus also says that the Nile ran with blood. Because of that most experts assume that the story was made up: a cheap propaganda stunt in order to set off the glory of the New Kingdom against that of the Old. And yet distinguished historians are of the opinon that it is a contemporary document dealing with the events as told in the Bible.

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68) The Rev. Archibald Henry Sayce (1846-1933) was a British linguist and a pioneer Assyriologist, who held a chair as Professor of Assyriology at the University of Oxford from 1891 to 1919.

69) The hardening of the heart usually takes place when someone dies and is caused because God withdraws his salvatory grace; and since from the heart of Man springs forth only evil (cf. Rom. 3:12, 7:18-19), the damned in Hell remain without remorse in their terrible state. If God hardened Pharaoh's heart by means of a withdrawal of his grace, then it was premature. Because God is righteous in all his ways, it is no more than logical that in one way or another He offered Pharaoh an opportunity for salvation. The Book of Jasher (81:40-41) comments on this: "And when the children of Israel had entered the sea, the Egyptians came after them, and the waters of the sea returned upon them, and they all sank in the water, and not one man was left except Pharaoh, who gave thanks to the Lord and believed in Him. Therefore, the Lord did not cause him to perish at that time with the Egyptians. And the Lord ordered an angel to take him from amongst the Egyptians, who cast him upon the land of Nineveh and he reigned over it for a long time."

70) Known as Leiden Papyrus 344 - http://members.tripod.com/~Raseneb/Ipuwer See: Appendix 12.

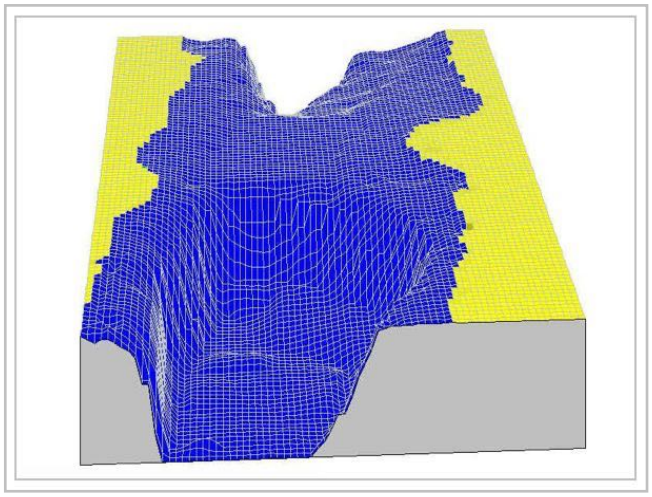
71) The jewellery the Israelites obtained on the eve of the Exodus – euphemistically says "borrowed" though "requested" would also be a correct translation. (Ex. 12:33-36) This can be seen as a belated payment for their slave labour, and rightly so since, at the time, they had not landed in Egypt as prisoners of war but had gained their place thanks to the wise policies of Joseph, who then ruled as Viceroy over Egypt.

Passage to the Nuweiba delta, with the Biblical Sinai at the other side

2.6 – Via a Diversion to the Final Destination

After this interlude we continue with the Exodus Case of Lennart Möller. We have now reached page 168 of his book (1st printing), where we see the people move east towards the Mountain of God. They approach the northernmost point of the Gulf of Aqaba, but then God orders them to return to the desert with the not very encouraging announcement: "*Then Pharaoh will think: They are bewildered by the land; the wilderness has closed them in*". (Ex. 14:3) In the Bible (Ex. 14:2) there is the remark, giving little clarification, to indicate the location of the crossing of the Red Sea: *"between Migdol and the sea".* The name in Hebrew indicates a watchtower that could have served as a customs post to observe any border violations. Thanks to the indications given by Flavius Joseph (Antiquities 2:15:3) the place they trekked to can be easily recognised (see image above): *"There was [on each side] a [ridge of] mountains that terminated at the sea, which were impassable by reason of their roughness, and obstructed the flight [of the Hebrews]; wherefore they there pressed upon the Hebrews with their army, where [the ridges of] the mountains were closed with the sea."* The Wadi Watir passage, halfway the Gulf of Aqaba, is characterised by towering rocks soaring into the sky, and gives access to a delta, now known as the Nuweiba which, in translation, means 'bubbling springs'. The people under Moses' leadership were as trapped there as fish in a net. When they saw Pharaoh storming towards them with his threatening armed men, a panic-stricken fear laid hold of them and they cried out to God in loud voices, and they turned their anger on Moses: "*Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die into the wilderness?*" (Ex. 14:11) The interesting thing about this delta is that it runs along like a softly undulating underwater slope. Somewhere in the middle of this underwater bridge, which is easy to walk along - no deep mud floor - and runs for a distance of about 15 kilometres, the path begins

to climb again, and finally arrives at the opposite shore in Arabia in an area that was called Midian at the time. The sea bed north of the bridge is nearly 1,000 metres deep, at its southern end it reaches nearly 2,000 metres, but the bridge itself scarcely exceeds a depth of 240 metres at its deepest part. It is like a broad and easy highway that is most unusually littered with petrified parts of Egyptian war chariots and petrified bones of humans and cattle,[72] which by means of the kind of chariot wheels Möller succeeded in dating to the 18th Dynasty. This is ample proof that the dividing of the Red Sea and subsequent destruction of the Egyptian armed forces is not a fairy tale.[73]



After the article was published someone remarked that according to the book of Exodus the sea was divided by a strong wind and that therefore the passage could never have been hundreds of meters deep. In answering this critical remark I would like to quote from John Gill's "Exposition of the Entire Bible": [74]

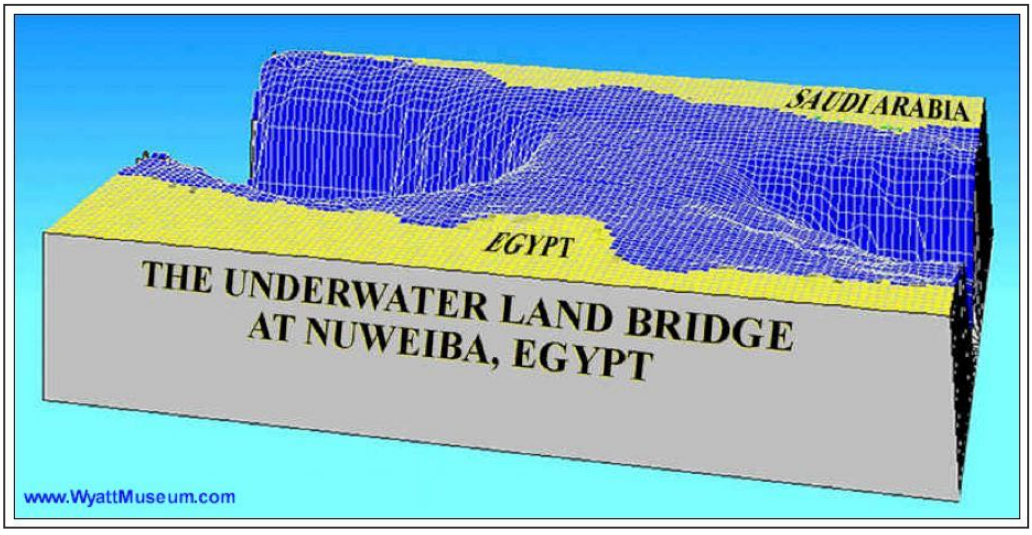
> «« And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea… with his rod in his hand, as he was directed to by Jehovah, as seen in Exodus 14:16 : *"Raise your staff and stretch*

72) The Aqaba waters have a curious effect of petrification, which is evident at the walls below the sea level around a little island in the Northern part of the Gulf, called Geziret Fara'ûn. By the process of petrification those walls have been cemented into a single slab of conglomerate, but its stones were once laid upon each other by men.

73) Moses entreats the Pharaoh to let his people go in order to serve the Lord and make sacrifices. This implies that they would return afterwards. Pharaoh did not believe that they would do so, which explains his refusal to let them go. The question is: was there a violation of the pledge on Moses' part? No, because Moses and his people went to the Nuweiba delta, a place without escape. The Nuweiba was also within the confines of the Egyptian hegemony. Remains have been found of a watchtower/migdol to observe possible movements, because it is a convenient mooring place for boats. Once Pharaoh discovered that they could not escape, he decided to crush them and take the rest as slaves back. This treachery annuled the contract, as was also the opinion of Flavius Josephus (Antiquities 2:15,3), which means that Moses and God were no longer bound by the promise of return.

74) John Gill (1697-1771) was an English Baptist pastor who preached in the same church as Charles Spurgeon. Gill is less known, but his works contain gems found nowhere outside of the ancient Jewish writings.

out your hand over the sea to cleave the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground." And so happened. Exodus 14:21-22 : *"Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the Lord drove the seawater back with a strong east wind and so He turned (the muddy soil) into dry land. The (deep) waters were cleft, and the Israelites went through the sea on the dry soil, with a wall of water on their right and on their left."* (see also Jos. 3:16, 4:23, Ps. 66:6; 136:13) (…) At the time Moses' rod had been lift up upon the rivers Egypt, and now upon the Yam Sof (Red Sea): and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night; and the direction of the Yam Sof being nearly, if not altogether, north and south, it was in a proper situation to be wrought upon by an easterly wind, though the Septuagint version renders it 'a strong south wind' (see also Ex. 10:19). No wind of itself, without the exertion and continuance of 'almighty power', in a miraculous way, could have so thrown the waves of the sea on heaps, and retained them so long, that such a vast number of people should pass through it as on dry land. Though this was an instrument Jehovah made use of, and that both to divide the waters of the sea, and to dry and harden the bottom of it, and make it fit for travelling, we can imagine the method as follows: and He made the sea dry land or made the bottom of it dry, so that it could be trod and walked upon with ease, without sinking in, sticking fast, or slipping about – indeed very remarkable. And the waters were cleft or better 'after' they were cleft, for they were first cleft before the seawater that remained could be blown away all that night. »» And I would like to add the remark that behind them the seabed became mud again by the seeping of water, which is one of the reasons why the Egyptian army, according to Exodus 14:25, could not catch up with them.



Illustrations courtesy of the 'Wyatt Archeological Research' www.wyattmuseum.com

Ron Wyatt has also done some fascinating work in "**Exploring the Ark of the Covenant**", which article was available on their website from 2008. Added to it is an article by Arthur & Rosalind Eedle, published in 1996 about the finding of the Ark in Jerusalem and about Jesus' Blood found on the Mercy Seat, hidden just below the place of the crucifixion site. See App. 12.

At this point in his book Möller is a little mistaken. He conjectures that the Egyptians died because their lungs exploded while they were shooting upwards after being taken by surprise by the water. But this cannot be so, for at the very moment that the water onto them fell (in cascade from West to East), their lungs were still breathing at a pressure of one atmosphere, and so their lungs did not burst but were compressed. In 2003, the deep unassisted diving record was brought to 170 metres. By gliding downwards with a weight along a cable and upwards by means of a balloon, both directions can be travelled within 3 minutes without risk of air bubbles in the blood or the lungs bursting. At a depth of 170 metres the lungs diminish to the size of an orange because of the tremendous pressure, but on the surface they return to normal size again. The cause of death of the Egyptians should be sought rather in the breaking of the neck, the most vulnerable part of the spinal cord. The collapsing wall of water can have easily reached a force of more than 100 tons per square metre. A more than 30-metre-high giant wave – very exceptionally caused by a heavy storm – can unleash that power, whereas 50 tons suffices to wrinkle the steel of an ocean-going ship as if it were cardboard. And 200 tons can punch a hole in an ocean giant in just a matter of seconds. Because death was immediate and the bodies had no physical means to (unconsciously) take water in, this explains why (cf. Ex. 14:30) so many soldiers drifted upwards and were washed ashore on the east coast where the Israelites were standing there watching.[75)]

After this crescendo the people of Israel goes forward to its grand finale. Möller does a good job of locating the Mountain at what is now called the Jabal Al-Lawz or Almond Mountain, being situated in an arid and desolate region - which is what Horeb means in Hebrew. Through the millennia this unhabited region has well preserved the evidence of Moses' stay with the great multitude of people that followed him. In this kind of arid region such a capacity for conservation is not exceptional. How does Möller know it is the true Sinai? Because every artifact named in the Bible is there… exactly as it should be… as if the events happened just a couple of years ago. The top of the mountain was once burned with intense heat, melting the solid rock into obsidian. The altar of the Golden Calf is at its base. The 20-metre-tall split rock at Horeb is there with water rushing out of it at the time, and down the hill we find a dry river bed that leads to a dried up lake. The rock along its course is deeply eroded by the action of the water. The altar of twelve pillars is there too. In the vicinity of the Al-Lawz are a great number of stone blocks marked with a foot or a shoe, which means: "go bare footed as you are now entering sacred territory". There are also pictures of Egyptian Apis bulls, on which the Golden Calf was modelled, nowhere else to be found in Saudi-Arabia.[76)] So much for "The Exodus Case".

The Al-Lawz is the highest mountain in the region, as Josephus also states in his Jewish Antiquities (3:5,1). The peak even shows up on maps to a scale of 1 to 12 million (1 cm. =

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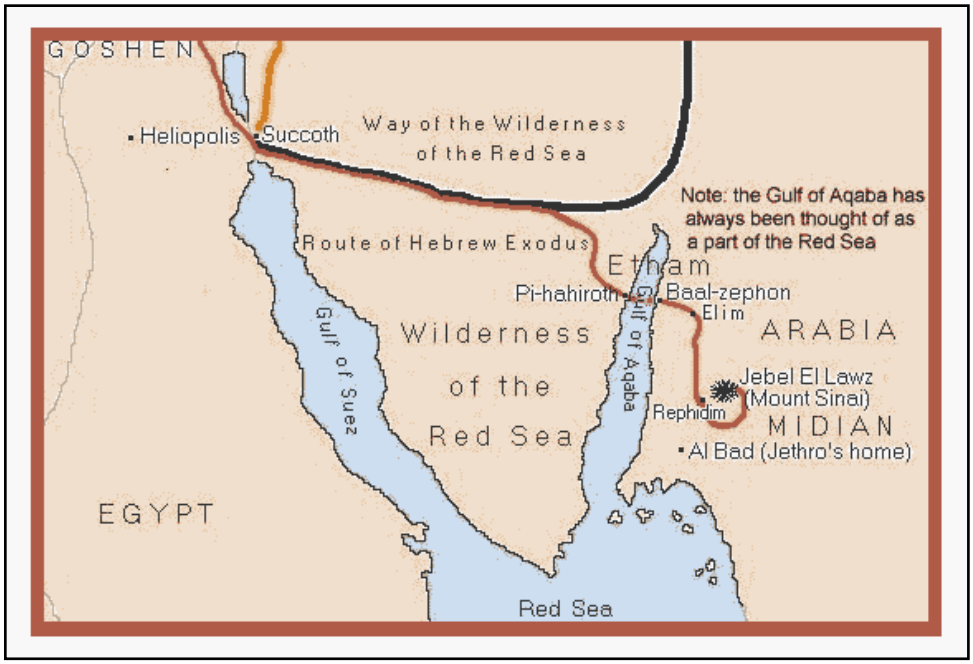
75) The song of Moses (Ex. 15:4-5) says that after having been overwhelmed by the sea, the Egyptians sank like stones, of course not those dead who washed ashore by the west eastern movement of the cascading water walls breaking down. (Ex. 14:30) In order to sink like stones, they would first have to rise in the water. Maybe the rapid sinking had to do with the water turbulence, because in spite of the fact that their longs contained no water, their floating power must have been very little, because of their clothing.

120 km.). It is 2580 metres high, which compares to the other mountain of the Christian tradition on what is now called the Sinai Peninsula, but originally Paran.[77)] This is generally believed to be God's mountain although the Bible clearly states that Mount Horeb lies in Arabia within the land of Midian (Ex. 3:1, 17:6; Gal. 4:25). It is on the Mount Horeb, not far at the opposite side of the Sof Sea, that God revealed Himself to Moses in the mysterious burning bush, when God commissioned him to return to Egypt after his 40 years of exile in order to free his people. This is the first time the name is mentioned in the Bible. This cannot be understood otherwise than to have happened east of the Allanitic Gulf (Gulf of Aqaba). It was the logical place for Moses to go when, 40 years earlier, he fled from the grim face of the Pharaoh. (Ex. 2:15) The whole of Paran was under the influence of Egypt and only in Midian could he continue to live undisturbed, staying all those years with the tribe of Sheikh Jethro whose black daughter he married at a certain point in time. When leading the Exodus, he went back to the place he knew so well. Jethro will have been a mixture of the children of Keturah and Ishmael (Keturah became Abraham's wife after Sara's death and one of their sons was Midian).



76) The Golden Calf was an Apis bull. In ancient Egypt Apis was regarded as the mediator between the people and Ptah, the creator of the universe, after whom in earlier times the city of Memphis was named – 'Hicuptah' or the house of the soul of Ptah, that later changed to 'Hegupt' or Egypt. The adoration of the Golden Calf, therefore, was no adoration of a different God, but of a different mediator, in this case Moses to whom apparently they ascribed divine qualities. After the people had given up all hope to see Moses ever back again, whom the mountain of fire seemed to have devoured, the people was now looking for another mediator who could converse between them and the One God of Israel.

77) Yohanan Aharoni convincingly shows in Beno Rothenberg's book from 1961 (printed by Joh. Enschedé & Zn), entitled "God's Wilderness", that Paran is the original name of what is now known as the Sinai peninsula (pp. 165-170).

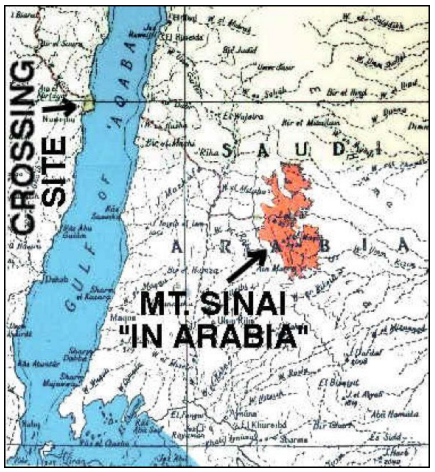
2.7 – Is the Mountain of the Lord the Al-Lawz or the Al-Gaw?

Because of the fact that the Bible so clearly indicates that Mount Horeb (or Sinai) must lie in the land of Midian, no wonder other investigators have also located God's mountain somewhere in that area, like Alois Musil in the beginning of the 20th century, and more recently the Orientalist Jean Koenig in a book that appeared in 1971, called: "Le Site de Al-Jaw dans l'ancien pays de Madian" (The site of Al-Jaw in the ancient land of Madian). Alois Musil first located God's Mountain in the fertile and pale green basin of the Al-Gaw (called Al-Jaw by Koenig), several hundred kilometres further into Arab territory, but he later revised his opinion. Jean Koenig tries to make a case that indeed it should be the Al-Gaw and not the Al-Lawz were God's Mountain is situated. The surroundings of the Al-Gaw were still considered in 1910, during the visit of Musil, as a sacred soil where the grazing of flocks was prohibited. But nowadays they are freely trodden by the herds. The entrance to these sites was strictly forbidden to Musil and to emphasise their demands he and his guides were seriously beaten and threatened with death by the local Beli tribe. Already 33 years earlier C.M. Doughty was told at the same spot of ancient ruins. He was not able to check it out because of the threatening opposition, but Musil insisted and succeeded in carrying out his plan. According to an ancient and local tradition, the caves of the servants of Mûsa (Moses) are to be found at a distance of 20 kilometres east of the Al-Gaw. The story goes that they gave shelter to the servants while their master conversed with God. Professor Jean Koenig describes the Al-Lawz as a particularly arid region and this is precisely what the term Horeb means, while on the other hand the Al-Gaw has a hospitable appearance. In the middle of the plateau lies the famous Bedr of which Koenig thinks that it is the Sinai of the divine revelation. This Bedr looks slightly ridiculous if it is supposed to be the mountain of revelation, for it is only an elevation, an eminence, no more. Koenig mentions a Jewish tradition that indicates that the Sinai Mountain was low in altitude, even lower than all the others, but this is not very convincing because the Midrash Rabba on Numbers (under Naso 13:3), referred to, is a late composition from after the seventh century and therefore of little significance. Another Midrash on Psalm 68:9 has been reported by the renegate Martin Buber (1878-1965), so Koenig says, and would be in the same vein.

Rock painting at the Al-Lawz

'Jaw' or 'Gaw' indicates in the Arab language a place where water collects, a depression or a basin. Forms of this word, like Jawf and Jawsh, are found for several places in the Mid-East. The region consists of a plain with a good supply of water and encompasses a surface of several hundred square kilometres completely surrounded by a desert of solidified lava that seems to be drawn from hell itself. These immense lava fields of Arabia are amongst the most forbidding deserts in the world and it is in this kind of environment that the Al-Gaw is situated. All these fields are hard to traverse; they are very barren and littered with stones, often very sharp, that easily harm camels' feet, and deeply. The scene

alternates with monoliths and is intersected in many places by steep valleys or troughs with vertical walls, which in several sectors are dominated by volcanic chimneys. The soil is as black as soot, an aspect that only gives way to shades of dark blue and rust. A desert that has been described as a wilderness of burning and rusty horror of unformed matter. All travellers depict these surroundings as extremely difficult to pass through; they appear lifeless and are even hostile to the passage of life. These lavas of Safâ have been portrayed as an intertwining of monstrous lava streams, a petrified tempest, a bewildering chaos of black masses of basalt thrown around yawning craters. And it would be in this kind of environment that the Israelites with their children and all their live-stock crossed with six encampments, described as such in Numbers 33:13, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22. The ancient names of this region seem to allow for this kind of conjecture. Yet, this is unthinkable. Let's be reasonable! Its inpassability and the too great distance from place of arrival at the east coast of the Gulf of Aqaba should be the reasons why Musil, who travelled extensively in the region, finally rejected the Al-Gaw as possible site for the biblical Sinai.[78)] Musil indicates in his 1926 report, "The Northern Hegâz" (p. 298), that the Biblical Sinai should be found somewhere more than 200 kilometres northwest of the Al-Gaw, right in the centre of Midianite country near the Se'îb of Hrob, that is the valley of Horeb, in the northeast of the plain of the Al-Hrajbe (presently the Wadi Ifalhfal), a conclusion that tallies with the massif of Al-Lawz, exactly where Lennart Möller locates the 'mountain of mountains'. Another important reason for Musil to reject the Al-Gaw was related to his discovery that between the Al-Lawz and the Gulf of Aqaba lies a plain that was called in his days the Ar-Raphid, identified by him as Rephidim, which translates as 'encampment', referred to in the Bible in Numbers 33:14 and Exodus 17. According to the Biblical text this site is found near the Rock of Horeb, which faces the mountain of Horeb, also called Sinai, which, 70 years later, was identified as such by Lennart Möller and his companion Ronald Wyatt.



Rephidim served as an encampment and as a battlefield against the Amalecites just prior to the people entering Sinai. This plain has also been identified by Möller as Rephidim

78) The work of Alois Musil, called "The Northern Hegâz", was published in 1926 by the American Geographical Society. It is a significant topographical contribution. In this connection, Jean Koenig, Professor at the Oriental Institute of the University of Brussels, comments: "The topographic, toponymic and ethnographic material presented by Musil invite our admiration by their wealth of detail. Even better: they contain geographical names and traditions that, since then, have been lost in Bedouin society as a consequence of the great changes in modern Arabia that were taking effect after the First World War, soon after Musil finished his expedition. If the latter would not have explored the matter, a large number of traditional Bedouin toponyms would have been lost beyond retrieval." "Le Site de Al-Jaw dans l'Ancien Pays de Madian" par J. Koenig – Paul Geuthner, Paris # 1971 (pp. 37-39).

although he was not aware of the name of Ar-Raphid, which is not used nowadays. Nor had he studied the writings of Musil. Because of the position of the Ar-Raphid, too far away from the Al-Gaw, Musil was obliged to change his opinion and so he dismissed his earlier view that the Al-Gaw was possibly the Horeb plain. Because of a lack of a suitable chain of identifications and approximate itinerary, which is essential to the establishment of an historical proof, Musil renounced his opinion of 1910-1911 with regard to the site of the Al-Gaw, which he advanced in a provisional note in the Journal of the Imperial University of Sciences of Vienna (p. 137 sqq.). He substantiates his new conclusion in his report of 1926, entitled "The Northern Hegâz". The sequence of the wanderings of the people of Israel proposed by Koenig, based on the preparatory work of Musil, does not make sense for it does not address the problem of how the people, after their passage of the Red Sea, could possibly have arrived at the Al-Gaw that Koenig believes to be the true historical Sinai. Koenig proposes a hypothetical itinerary that begins after the awesome events at Mount Sinai but he does not care to discuss how the people could have arrived there. Although this part is consistent with the Biblical facts, it only provides a very limited solution without answering the arguments put forward by Musil. In particular it is not consistent with the discoveries of the inscriptions on the modern Sinai Peninsula, already discussed.

Egyptian wheels and horses in Gulf Aqaba

The foregoing leads to the conclusion that the Jewish colonies that settled in Arabia after the period of the birth of Islam, thus at a relatively recent stage, have transmitted a tradition to the Bedouins that in the final resort was not firmly grounded. Koenig himself explains on his book cover: *"It appears, amongst other things, that the tradition of the sacred place that goes back to the Israelite antiquity has been transmitted to the Bedouins by mediation of the Jewish colonies that moved to Arabia near the period of the early beginnings of the Islam."* In my view the local people have probably mixed this story with an ancient and true Bedouin tradition, which had nothing to do with the biblical episode. On the other hand, the Jewish tradition was not entirely unfounded because the real events happened some 200 kilometres away. As regards the local tradition, I notice that at 70 kilometres southeast of the Al-Gaw, just beyond the lava fields, lies Madâ'in Sâlih, known in earlier times as Al-Hiyr or Al-Hegr. Incidentally, Koenig notices a tradition found in the comments of the Targum of Onkelos and the Gemara of Jerusalem, where the fountain of Genesis 16:14, there called La-Chayroi - which means "the One who lives and sees me" - is identified with Al-Hiyr, which is the place where the angel appeared to Hagar, the slave of Abraham who got his first son and was sent away because of her pretentions. This is situated, according to verse 14, halfway between Kadesh (Barnea) and Bered. The latter, then, could very well be in the vicinity of Medina, formerly known as Yitrab, where place names with the root 'brd' are quite common. Madâ'in Sâlih is presented on old maps, like that of R. de Vaugondy of 1761, as the town of Hagiar.[79)] Musil, in his 1926 report, based on ancient sources, adds

dozens of references to this observation. The town of Hagar ought to be found in that region for it is called in verse 7 *"the way (through the desert) of Shur"*. Remarkably, the epistle to the Galatians says (4:24-25): *"These women are allegorically two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai giving birth to bondage, which is Hagar - now this, Hagar, is Mount Sina in Arabia (so, not Paran)."* Rijm Al-Fâsid that lies 24 kilometres from the Al-Gaw, could be rendered, according to Koenig, as Kibroth Hattaavah, which means Graves of Craving, but we shall see that it does not tally.

The Mount of Almonds (the black marking at top left is rock glazed by enormous heat)

There is a puzzling incident in Exodus 17:1-6, shortly after the miraculous Red Sea crossing. Moses is therefore denied entry into the Promised Land. Why? Because he had hit the rock twice instead of once to obtain drinking water. Many do not understand why that is so wrong. It is not. It's the way of hitting. He sinned out of a fit of anger. We can conclude that it was not a dignified slapping on the rock, but a furious slapping. The relevant passage reads:

> «« Then all the congregation of the children of Israel, according to the command of the Lord, marched in stages 'into' the wilderness of Sinai and encamped first in Rephidim (the tenth encampment in ten days), but there was no drinking water for the people. So the people began to complain to Moses, saying: *"Give us water to drink."* (…) They snapped at him*: "Did you bring us out of Egypt to let us and our children and our livestock die of thirst?"* Then the Lord said to Moses: *"Go ahead of the people and take some of the elders of Israel with you. Take the staff with which you struck the Nile in your hand and set out. Behold, I will stand there before you on the rock opposite Horeb. You will strike it, and water will spew out, so that the people may drink."* And Moses did this in the sight of Israel's elders. »» Note: Almost all translations say 'from' Sinai, but this is wrong because according to the overview of Numbers 33, in particular verses 14 and 15, the scene of Rephidim is shortly after the passage through the Red Sea and just before the people arrive at the Horeb range. Who realizes that between Rephidim and Kibroth Hattaavah (verse 16) is a timespan of more than 14 months?

When Moses furiously struck the rock at Horeb because of the murmuring of the people, he was severely punished, for they could not differentiate between his wrath and God's. Later, when he came down from the mountain range, he smashed the tables of law to pieces, and it was then also God's wrath. However, here in the plain opposite Horeb, later

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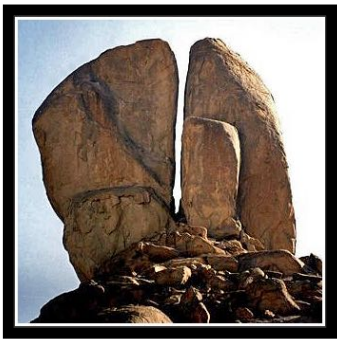
79) Page 127 (1st printing) or p. 133 (4th printing) of Lennart Möller's book shows a map of "de Vaugondy" ("Vagoudy" is a typing error) and speaks of a mountaineous area, whereas the map clearly shows a city.

called Massa and Meribah, it was different. Those words mean rebellion and trial. (Heb. 3: 9) The people did not understand that it was only his human impulse that caused this outburst of anger. Psalm 95 says about this: *"Do not harden your heart as at Massah and Meribah."* Here the people are targeted, showing that Moses' anger was not unfounded. Psalm 106:32-33 reads: *"They angered Him also at the waters of Meribah (the water gushing out had formed pools of water), so that it went ill with Moses on account of them, for they had provoked his mood so that thoughtless words escaped his mouth."* So it was not only an uncontrollable slapping, but also an uncontrollable speaking. Logical right? What usually doesn't really count has now become a serious offense. It is worth mentioning that Psalm 95 states that because of the offenses such as at Massa and Meribah - which was just one of the incidents - this generation would never enter the Promised Land, here called 'God's Rest'. Numbers 20 again mentions a rock that spurts water after Moses had 'spoken' to the rock, so this is not to be confused with the account from Exodus 17.



The rock split by the water opposite the Horeb range

2.8 – After the Horeb

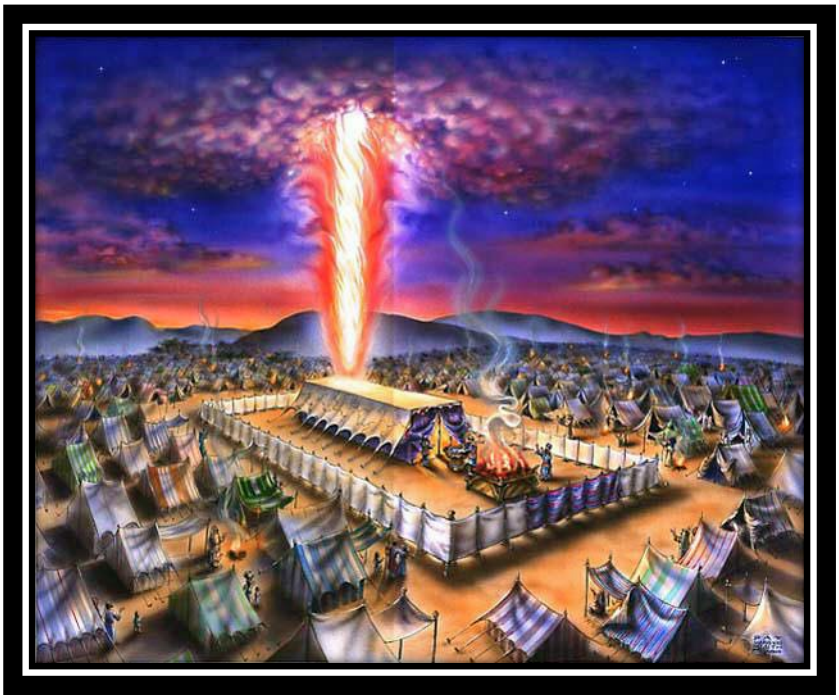
We are now going to discuss the episode that follows after Mount Horeb. The Book of Exodus records the events leading up to the Exodus from Egypt and then until a year later. The events recorded in the Book Numbers begin fourteen months later, for the first verse says: *"In the wilderness of Sinai, Yahweh spoke to Moses in the tent of revelation on the first day of the second month in the second year after their exodus from Egypt."* So they stayed in the Sinai for over a year. Toward the end of Numbers (ch. 33), a schematic overview is presented from beginning to end, including the Book of Exodus. Then comes the Book of Deuteronomy, which picks up the narration in the fortieth year after the Exodus, as it tells in the third verse: *"It came to pass in the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month, that Moses spoke."*

Kibroth Hattaavah indicates the first encampment after they left the Biblical Sinai, for it is said in Numbers 33:16: *"They moved from the wilderness of (the Biblical) Sinai and camped at Kibroth Hattaavah."* A superficial reading of Numbers 10:33 to 11:34 gives the impression that Kibroth Hattaavah is found at three marching days from Sinai, or at a distance of less than 75 km.[80)] More careful reading reveals something different. The text in Numbers 11 should be split between verses 3 and 4 – as it is, in fact, in many Bibles. The first three verses [81)] tell about the grumbling of the people after a three days' march, without going into detail. Punishment is immediate and handed out by fire in the outskirts of the caravan, which means at its sides, because the migration of peoples with foraging

80) Mount Horeb or the Al-Lawz and Kadesh Barnea are, according to Deuteronomy 1:2 eleven days' march or 275 km. from one another, so one day's march equals 25 km.

81) The verses in Num. 11:1-3 have already been discussed in the allegorical approach of Book 1 under of §12.

animals requires sufficient pasture for those who lag behind, which is a limiting condition to its length (so conceived a large caravan could be 1 kilometer long and 6 wide). Because of the punishment by fire the people must have been intimidated and kept quiet for quite a while. The name of this place of fire is called Taberah (burnt-out resting place), which is not an encampment in the meaning of a protracted stay but merely a stage in the journey because the first encampment of this journey, according to Numbers 33:1-49, will be the place of Kibroth Hattaavah, which lies close to the Serabit el-Khadem mountain, where we find de 'Graves of the Jews', as already discussed. They arrive there after a tiring journey of twelve days, maybe thirteen, having marched under a burning sun (including the first three days to Thabera).



In Kibroth Hattaavah the *"mixed multitude who were among them"* (it does not say as sometimes traslated: 'the people in the middle of the caravan'), were lusting for meat. This is after such a gruelling trip understandable. We should realize that this ragtag and bobtail did not consist of Israelites, which we see if we read Exodus 12:38 attentively. That there were strangers also appears from the account of the entrance in the Promised Land, because it is written: *"There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded, which Joshua did not read before all the assembly of Israel, as well as the women, the little ones ...and the strangers who were living among them."* (Josh. 8:35) It follows that they the strangers were less willing to make sacrifices. After having arrived in Kibroth Hattaavah they loudly insist on meat. What a nerve! The Jewish Philo of Alexandria, a contemporary of Jesus, describes the mixed multitude in "De Vita Mosis" (1:147), and he tells that they went forth with the Israelites and consisted of a group of strangers who were among the true citizens; there were also those who were the offspring of a relation between a Hebrew father and an Egyptian wife and had been accepted as members of their

father's race; moreover there were those who admired the piety of these people and had therefore joined them; finally there were the people who walked over because they had come to the recognition of the right way, having witnessed the heaviness and multitude of the punishments that had hit their fellow countrymen.

Flavius Josephus says of this episode, which indicates a journey of a certain length (Ant. 3:295): *"Moses went from Mount Sinai and, having passed through several mansions of which we will not speak, he came to a place called Hazeroth."* He situates Hazeroth next to Kibroth Hattaavah.

We have thus come to the conclusion that after the great events at Al-Lawz the people turn back via the northern extremity of the Golf of Aqaba. Henceforth they remain in Paran on what is known today as the Sinai Peninsula. They stay a long time in this wilderness, which northern frontier is marked by Kadesh Barnea, the town from which spies were sent to inspect the Promised Land in the area now called the Negev Desert; and the south by a mountainous region where the monastery of Saint Catherine is to be found next the mountain, mistakenly claimed to be the 'Mountain of God'. This part stretches out to the Serabit el-Khadem mines at the now called Gulf of Suez. Those mines were exploited by the Egyptians and were known by the Israelites from the time of their slavery. Serabit el Khadem is Arabic for 'Heights of the Slave', an apt name considering the thousands of slaves who once toiled searching for turquoise, the favourite ornamental stone of the time. Because the whole Egyptian army had been eradicated by the destructive water, the Israelites no longer had anything to fear and could easily go back on their tracks. According to "The Ancient Book of Jasher", chapters 83 and 84, they left the Sinai for Paran 14 months after the beginning of the Exodus. According to the same book they were going to stay in Paran for 19 years. After this long period, according to the same book, they went to the region east of the line drawn north from Etzion Geber, which track of land belonged to the Edomites, Moabites en Amorites, in that geographical sequence. After having camped 19 years at the borders of Edom, the people returns to Paran in the first month of the 40th year (again according to Jasher), to pitch the tents in the vicinity of Kadesh. There they engage with a Canaanitic king in battle, as described in Numbers 21:1-3. They subsequently head east again, where they engage into combat with the Amorites and others. At that point the Exodus, after wanderings of 40 years, comes to its end. Finally the people may enter the Promised Land! We have now established the general outline of the Exodus. The circle is closed.

(Continuation page 148)

APPENDIX 12

The Admonitions of an Egyptian Sage

The official name of this document is Leiden Papyrus #344, after the Dutch museum where it is currently kept. The style of writing suggests that it was a XIXth Dynasty composition, but it is probably a copy of one written much earlier. The first Egyptologist to make a detailed examination of it was Sir Alan Gardiner, in 1909. He believed it to be a XIIth dynasty work, recalling the chaos of the First Intermediate Period. Most scholars have agreed with Gardiner, though over the years some (Kurt Sethe, Immanuel Velikovsky and Jan van Seters, to name a few) have argued that a Second Intermediate Period date is more likely. If Gardiner was correct, this is the only record we have, describing the turbulent years between the Old and the Middle Kingdom.

Unfortunately for us, the papyrus is in poor condition. Both the beginning and end are missing, and the body of the text has many lacunae (gaps) in it. What we can figure out is that a wise man named Ipuwer is addressing the Pharaoh, whose name was probably given in the head of the document, now missing. He describes in great detail how the Two Lands have fallen into chaos, blames it on the failure of the king to keep order, and urges him to "destroy the enemies of the august Residence" and perform the required religious rites so that the gods will support Egypt's restoration. On the other hand, this writing may have been an act of political propaganda, contrasting the good times of the reigning Pharaoh with how bad things were in the previous dynasty.

Chapter 1

[…] The door [keepers] say: "Let us go and plunder." The confectioners […]. The washerman refuses to carry his load […] the bird [catchers] have drawn up in line of battle […] the inhabitants] of the Delta carry shields.

The brewers/ […] sad. A man regards his son as his enemy. Confusion […] another. Come and conquer; judge […] what was ordained for you in the time of Horus, in the age [of the Ennead […]. The virtuous man goes in mourning because of what has happened in the land […] goes […] the tribes of the desert have become Egyptians everywhere.

Indeed, the face is pale;/ […] what the ancestors foretold has arrived at [fruition…] the land is full of confederates, and a man goes to plough with his shield. Indeed,

the meek say: ["He who is …of] face is as a well-born man." Indeed, [the face] is pale; the bowman is ready, wrongdoing is everywhere, and there is no man of yesterday. [1] Indeed, the plunderer […] everywhere, and the servant takes what he finds. Indeed, the Nile overflows, yet none plough for it. Everyone says: "We do not know what will happen throughout the land." Indeed, the women are barren and none conceive. Khnum fashions (men) no more because of the condition of the land.

Chapter 2

Indeed, poor men have become owners of wealth, and he who could not make sandals for himself is now a possessor of riches.

Indeed, men's slaves, their hearts are sad, and magistrates do not fraternize with their people when they shout.

Indeed, [hearts] are violent, pestilence is throughout the land, blood is everywhere, death is not lacking, and the mummy-cloth speaks even before one comes near it.

Indeed, many dead are buried in the river; the stream is a sepulcher and the place of embalmment has become a stream.

Indeed, noblemen are in distress, while the poor man is full of joy. Every town says: "Let us suppress the powerful among us."

Indeed, men are like ibises. [2] Squalor is throughout the land, and there are none indeed whose clothes are white in these times.

Indeed, the land turns around as does a potter's wheel; the robber is a possessor of riches and [the rich man is become] a plunderer.

Indeed, trusty servants are […]; the poor man [complains]: "How terrible! What am I to do?" Indeed, the river is blood, yet men drink of it. Men shrink from human beings and thirst after water.

Indeed, gates, columns and walls are burnt up, while the hall of the palace stands firm and endures.

Indeed, the ship of [the southerners] has broken up; towns are destroyed and Upper Egypt has become an empty waste. [3]

Indeed, crocodiles [are glutted] with the fish they have taken, [4] for men go to them of their own accord; it is the destruction of the land. Men say: "Do not walk here; behold, it is a net." Behold, men tread [the water] like fishes, and the frightened man cannot distinguish it because of terror. [5]

Indeed, men are few, and he who places his brother in the ground is everywhere. When the wise man speaks, [he flees without delay]. [6]

Indeed, the well-born man […] through lack of recognition, and the child of his lady has become the son of his maidservant.

Chapter 3

Indeed, the desert is throughout the land, the nomes are laid waste, and barbarians from abroad have come to Egypt.

Indeed, men arrive […] and indeed, there are no Egyptians anywhere.

Indeed, gold and lapis lazuli, silver and turquoise, carnelian and amethyst, *Ibhet* stone and […] are strung on the necks of maidservants. Good things are throughout the land, (yet) housewives say: "Oh that we had something to eat!"

Indeed, […] noblewomen. Their bodies are in sad plight by reason of their rags, and their hearts sink when greeting [one another].

Indeed, /chests of ebony are broken up, and precious *ssndm*-wood is cleft asunder in beds […].

Indeed, the builders [of pyramids have become] cultivators, and those who were in the sacred bark are now yoked [to it]. None shall indeed sail northward to Byblos today; what shall we do for cedar trees for our mummies, and with the produce of which priests are buried and with the oil of which [chiefs] are embalmed as far as Keftiu? 7 They come no more; gold is lacking […] and materials for every kind of craft have come to an end. The […] of the palace is despoiled. How often do people of the oases come with their festival spices, mats, and skins, with fresh *rdmt*-plants, /grease of birds […] ?

Indeed, Elephantine and Thinis [are in the series] of Upper Egypt, (but) without paying taxes owing to civil strife. Lacking are grain, charcoal, *irtyw*-fruit, *m;'w*-wood, *nwt*-wood, and brushwood. The work of craftsmen and […] are the profit of the palace. To what purpose is a treasury without its revenues? Happy indeed is the heart of the king when truth comes to him! And every foreign land [comes]! *That* is our fate and *that* is our happiness! What can we do about it? All is ruin! Indeed, laughter is perished and is [no longer] made; it is groaning that is throughout the land, mingled with complaints.

Chapter 4

Indeed, every dead person is as a well-born man. 8 Those who were / Egyptians [have become] foreigners and are thrust aside.

Indeed, hair [has fallen out] for everybody, and the man of rank can no longer be distinguished from him who is nobody.

Indeed, […] because of noise; noise is not […] in years of noise, and there is no end [of] noise. 9

Indeed, great and small [say]: "I wish I might die." Little children say: "He should not have caused [me] to live."

Indeed, the children of princes are dashed against walls, and the children of the neck 10 are laid out on the high ground. 11

Indeed, those who were in the place of embalmment are laid out on the high ground, and the secrets of the embalmers are thrown down because of it.

Indeed, / that has perished which yesterday was seen, and the land is left over to its weakness like the cutting of flax.

Indeed, the Delta in its entirety will not be hidden, and Lower Egypt puts trust in trodden roads. What can one do? No […] exist anywhere, and men say: "Perdition to the secret place!" Behold, it is in the hands of those who do not know it like

those who know it. The desert dwellers are skilled in the crafts of the Delta. [12]

Indeed, citizens are put to the corn-rubbers, and those who used to don fine linen are beaten with […] Those who used never to see the day have gone out unhindered; those who were on their husbands' beds, / let them lie on rafts. I say: "It is too heavy for me," [13] concerning rafts bearing myrrh. Load them with vessels filled with […Let] them know the palanquin. [14] As for the butler, he is ruined. There are no remedies for it; noblewomen suffer like maidservants, minstrels are at the looms within the weaving-rooms, and what they sing to the Songstree-goddess is mourning. Talkers […] corn-rubbers.

Indeed, all female slaves are free with their tongues, and when their mistress speaks, it is irksome to the maidservants. Indeed, trees are felled and branches are stripped off.

Chapter 5

I have separated [15] him and his household slaves, / and men will say when they hear it: "Cakes are lacking for most children; there is no food […]. What is the taste of it like today?"

Indeed, magnates are hungry and perishing, followers are followed […] because of complaints.

Indeed, the hot-tempered man says: "If I knew where God is, then I would serve Him."

Indeed, [Right] pervades the land in name, but what men do in trusting to it is Wrong.

Indeed, runners are fighting over the spoil [of] / the robber, and all his property is carried off.

Indeed, all animals, their hearts weep; cattle moan because of the state of the land.

Indeed, the children of princes are dashed against walls, and the children of the neck are laid out on the high ground. Khnum groans because of his weariness.

Indeed, terror kills; [16] the frightened man opposes what is done against your enemies. Moreover, the few are pleased, while the rest are […] Is it by following the crocodile and cleaving it asunder? Is it by slaying the lion roasted on the fire? [Is it] by sprinkling for Ptah and taking […]? Why do you give to him? There is no reaching him. It is misery which you give to him.

Indeed, slaves […] / throughout the land, and the strong man sends to everyone; a man strikes his maternal brother. What is it that has been done? I speak to a ruined man.

Indeed, the ways are […], the roads are watched; men sit in the bushes until the benighted traveler comes in order to plunder his burden, and what is upon him is taken away. He is belabored with blows of a stick and murdered. [17]

Indeed, that has perished which yesterday was seen, and the land is left over to its weakness like the cutting of flax, commoners coming and going in dissolution […]

Chapter 6

Would that there were an end of men, without conception, / without birth! Then would the land be quiet from noise and tumult be no more.

Indeed, [men eat] herbage and wash [it] down with water; neither fruit nor herbage can be found [for] the birds, and […] is taken away from the mouth of the pig. No face is bright which you have […] 18 for me through hunger.

Indeed, everywhere barley has perished and men are stripped of clothes, spice, and oil; everyone says: "There is none." The storehouse is empty and its keeper is stretched on the ground; a happy state of affairs! […] / Would that I had raised my voice at that moment, that it might have saved me from the pain in which I am.

Indeed, the private council-chamber, its writings are taken away and the mysteries which were [in it] are laid bare.

Indeed, magic spells are divulged; *smw-* and *shnw*-spells are frustrated because they are remembered by men.

Indeed, public offices are opened and their inventories are taken away; the serf has become an owner of serfs.

Indeed, [scribes] are killed and their writings are taken away. Woe is me because of the misery of this time! Indeed, the writings of the scribes of the cadaster are destroyed, and the corn of Egypt is common property.

Indeed, the laws / of the council chamber are thrown out. Indeed, men walk on them in public places, and poor men break them up in the streets.

Indeed, the poor man has attained to the state of the Nine Gods, and the erstwhile procedure of the House of the Thirty 19 is divulged.

Indeed, the great council-chamber is a popular resort, and poor men come and go to the Great Mansions. 20

Indeed, the children of magnates are ejected into the streets; the wise man agrees and the fool says "no", and it is pleasing in the sight of him who knows nothing about it. 21

Indeed, those who were in the place of embalmment are laid out on the high ground, and the secrets of the embalmers are thrown down because of it.

Chapter 7

Behold, the fire has gone up on high, and its burning goes forth against the enemies of the land.

Behold, things have been done which have not happened for a long time past; the king has been deposed by the rabble.

Behold, he who was buried as a falcon 22 [is devoid] of biers, and what the pyramid concealed 23 has become empty.

Behold, it has befallen that the land has been deprived of the kingship by a few lawless men.

Behold, men have fallen into rebellion against the Uraeus, 24 the […] of Re, even she who makes the Two Lands content.

Behold, the secret of the land whose limits were unknown is divulged, and the Residence is thrown down in a moment.

Behold, Egypt is fallen to / pouring of water, and he who poured water on the ground has carried off the strong man in misery. 25

Behold, the Serpent 26 is taken from its hole, and the secrets of the Kings of Upper and Lower Egypt are divulged.

Behold, the Residence is afraid because of want, and [men go about] unopposed to stir up strife.

Behold, the land has knotted itself up with confederacies, and the coward takes the brave man's property.

Behold, the Serpent […] the dead: he who could not make a sarcophagus for himself is now the possessor of a tomb.

Behold, the possessors of tombs are ejected on to the high ground, while he who could not make a coffin for himself is now [the possessor] of a treasury.

Behold, this has happened [to] men; he who could not build a room for himself is now a possessor of walls.

Behold, the magistrates of the land are driven out throughout the land: […] are driven out from the / palaces.

Behold, noble ladies are now on rafts, and magnates are in the labor establishment, while he who could not sleep even on walls is now the possessor of a bed.

Behold, the possessor of wealth now spends the night thirsty, while he who once begged his dregs for himself is now the possessor of overflowing bowls.

Behold, the possessors of robes are now in rags, while he who could not weave for himself is now a possessor of fine linen.

Behold, he who could not build a boat for himself is now the possessor of a fleet; their erstwhile owner looks at them, but they are not his.

Behold, he who had no shade is now the possessor of shade, while the erstwhile possessors of shade are now in the full blast of the storm.

Behold, he who was ignorant of the lyre is now the possessor of a harp, while he who never sang for himself, now vaunts the Songstress-goddess.

Behold, those who possessed vessel-stands of copper […] not one of the jars thereof has been adorned.

Chapter 8

Behold, he who slept / wifeless through want [finds] riches, while he whom he never saw stands making dole.

Behold, he who had no property is now a possessor of wealth, and the magnate praises him.

Behold, the poor of the land have become rich, and the [erstwhile owner] of property is one who has nothing.

Behold, serving-men have become masters of butlers, and he who was once a messenger now sends someone else.

Behold, he who had no loaf is now the owner of a barn, and his storehouse is provided with the goods of another.

Behold, he whose hair is fallen out and who had no oil has now become the possessors of jars of sweet myrrh.

Behold, she who had no box is now the owner of a coffer, and she who had to look at her face in the water is now the owner of a mirror.

Behold, […]. Behold, a man is happy eating his food. Consume your goods in gladness and unhindered, for it is good for a man to eat his food; God commands it for him whom He has favored […]. 27

[Behold, he who did not know] his god now offers to him with incense of another [who is] not known [to him].

[Behold,] great ladies, once possessors of riches, now give their children for beds.

Behold, a man [to whom is given] a noble lady as wife, her father protects him, and he who has not […] killing him.

Behold, the children of magistrates are […the calves] / of cattle [are given over] to the plunderers.

Behold, priests transgress with the cattle of the poor 28 […].

Behold, he who could not slaughter for himself now slaughters bulls, and he who did not know how to carve now sees […].

Behold, priests transgress with geese, which are given [to] the gods instead of oxen.

Behold, maidservants […] offer ducks; noblewomen […]. 29

Behold, noblewomen flee; the overseers of […] and their [children] are cast down through fear of death.

[Behold,] the chiefs of the land flee; there is no purpose for them because of want. The lord of […].

Chapter 9

[Behold,] / those who once owned beds are now on the ground, while he who once slept in squalor now lays out a skin-mat for himself.

Behold, noblewomen go hungry, while the priests are sated with what has been prepared for them.

Behold, no offices are in their right place, 30 like a herd running at random without a herdsman.

Behold, cattle stray and there is none to collect them, but everyone fetches for himself those that are branded with his name.

Behold, a man is slain beside his brother, who runs away and abandons him to save his own skin.

Behold, he who had no yoke of oxen is now the owner of a herd, and he who could find for himself no ploughman is now the owner of cattle.

Behold, he who had no grain is now the owner of granaries, / and he who had to fetch loan-corn for himself is now one who issues it.

Behold, he who had no dependents is now an owner of serfs, and he who was [a magnate] now performs his own errands.

Behold, the strong men of the land, the condition of the people is not reported [to them]. All is ruin!

Behold, no craftsmen work, for the enemies of the land have impoverished its craftsmen.

[Behold, he who once recorded] the harvest now knows nothing about it, while he who never ploughed [for himself is now the owner of corn; the reaping] takes place but is not reported. The scribe [sits in his office], but his hands [are idle] in it. Destroyed is […] in that time, and a man looks [on his friend as] an adversary. The infirm man brings coolness [to what is hot…] fear […/…]. Poor men […the land] is not bright because of it.

Chapter 10

Destroyed is […] their food is taken from them […through] fear of his terror. The commoner begs […] messenger, but not […] time. He is captured laden with goods and [all his property] is taken away. […] men pass by his door […] the outside of the wall, a shed, and rooms containing falcons. [31] It is the common man who will be vigilant, / the day having dawned on him without his dreading it. Men run because of […for] the temple of the head, strained through a woven cloth within the house. What they make are tents, just like the desert folk.

Destroyed is the doing of that for which men are sent by retainers in the service of their masters; they have no readiness. Behold, they are five men, and they say: "Go on the road you know, for we have arrived." Lower Egypt weeps; the king's storehouse is the common property of everyone, and the entire palace is without its revenues. To it belong emmer and barley, fowl and fish; to it belong white cloth and fine linen, copper and oil; / to it belong carpet and mat, […] flowers and wheat-sheaf and all good revenues […] If the […] [32] it in the palace were delayed, men would be devoid [of…]. Destroy the enemies of the august Residence, splendid of magistrates […] in it like […]; indeed, the Governor of the City goes unescorted.

Destroy [the enemies of the august Residence,] splendid […].

[Destroy the enemies of] that erstwhile august Residence, manifold of laws […].

[Destroy the enemies of] / that erstwhile august [Residence…].

Destroy the enemies of that erstwhile august Residence […] none can stand […].

Destroy the enemies of that erstwhile august Residence, manifold of offices; indeed […]. Remember to immerse […] him who is in pain when he is sick in his body; show respect […] because of his god that he may guard the utterance […] his children who are witnesses of the surging of the flood.

Chapter 11

Remember to [… /…] shrine, to fumigate with incense and to offer water in a jar in the early morning. 33

Remember [to bring] fat *r*-geese, *trp*-geese, and ducks and to offer god's offerings to the gods. Remember to chew natron 34 and to prepare white bread; a man [should do it] on the day of wetting the head. Remember to erect flagstaffs and to carve offering stones 35, the priest cleansing the chapels and the temple being plastered [white] like milk; to make pleasant the odor of the horizon and to provide bread-offerings. Remember to observe regulations, to fix dates correctly, 36 and to remove him who enters / on the priestly office in impurity of body, for that is doing it wrongfully, it is destruction of the heart 37 […] the day which precedes eternity, the months […] years are known.

Remember to slaughter oxen […].

Remember to go forth purged […] who calls to you; to put r-geese on the fire […] to open the jar […] the shore of the waters […] of women […] clothing […/…] to give praise . . . in order to appease you. 38 […] lack of people; come […] Ra who commands […] worshipping him […] West until […] are diminished […]. Behold, why does he seek to fashion [men…]? The frightened man is not distinguished from the violent one.

Chapter 12

He 39 brings coolness upon heat; / men say: "He is the herdsman of mankind, and there is no evil in his heart." Though his herds are few, yet he spends a day to colloect them, their hearts being on fire. Would that he had perceived their nature in the first generation; then he would have imposed obstacles, he would have stretched out his arm against them, he would have destroyed their herds and their heritage. Men desire the giving of birth, but sadness supervenes, with needy people on all sides. So it is, and it will not pass away while the gods who are in the midst of it exist. Seed goes forth into mortal women, but none are found on the road. 40 Combat has gone forth, / and he who should be a redresser of evils is one who commits them; neither do men act as pilot in their hour of duty. Where is he 41 today? Is he asleep? Behold, his power is not seen. If we had been fed, I would not have found you, I would not have been summoned in vain; 42 Aggression against it 43 means pain of heart" is a saying on the lips of everyone. Today he who is afraid […] a myriad of people; […] did not see […] against the enemies of […] at his outer chamber; who enter the temple […] weeping for him […] that one who confounds what he has said … / The land has not fallen […] the statues are burned and their tombs destroyed […] he sees the day of […]. He who could not make for himself […] between sky and ground is afraid of everybody. […] if he does it […] what you dislike taking. Authority, knowledge, and truth are with you, yet confusion is what you set throughout the land, also the noise of tumult. Behold, one deals harm to another, for men conform to what you have commanded. If three men travel on the road, they are found to be only two, for the many kill the few.

Chapter 13

Does a herdsman desire death? Then may you command reply to be made, 44 / because it means that one loves another detests; it means that their existences are few everywhere; it means that you have acted so as to bring those things to pass. You have told lies, and the land is a weed which destroys men, and none can count on life. All these years are strife, and a man is murdered on his house-top even though he was vigilant in his gate lodge. Is he brave and saves himself? It means he will live.

When men send a servant for humble folk, he goes on the road until he sees the flood; the road is washed out / and he stands worried. What is on him is taken away, he is belabored with blows of a stick and wrongfully slain. Oh that you could taste a little of the misery of it! Then you would say […] from someone else as a wall, over and above […] hot […] years […].

[It is indeed good] when ships fare upstream […/…] robbing them. It is indeed good […]. [It is indeed] good when the net is drawn in and birds are tied up […].

It is [indeed] good […] dignities for them, and the roads are passable.

It is indeed good when the hands of men build pyramids, when ponds are dug and plantations of the trees of the gods are made.

It is indeed good when men are drunk; they drink *myt* and their hearts are happy.

Chapter 14

It is indeed good when shouting is in men's mouths, when the magnates of districts stand looking on at the shouting / in their houses, clad in a cloak, cleansed in front and well-provided within. 45

It is indeed good when beds are prepared and the headrests of magistrates are safely secured. Every man's need is satisfied with a couch in the shade, and a door is now shut on him who once slept in the bushes.

It is indeed good when fine linen is spread out on New Year's Day […] on the bank; when fine linen is spread out and cloaks are on the ground. The overseer of […] the trees, the poor […/…] in their midst like Asiatics […]. Men […] the state therof; they have come to an end of themselves; none can be found to stand up and protect themselves […]. Everyone fights for his sister and saves his own skin. Is it Nubians? Then will we guard ourselves; warriors are made many in order to ward off foreigners. Is it Libyans? Then we will turn away. The Medjay 46 are pleased with Egypt.

Chapter 15

How comes it that every man kills his brother? The troops / whom we marshaled for ourselves have turned into foreigners and have taken to ravaging. What has come to pass through it is informing the Asiatics of the state of the land; all the desert folk are possessed with the fear of it. 47 What the plebs have tasted […] without giving Egypt over [to] the sand. It is strong […] speak about you after

years […] devastate itself, it is the threshing floor which nourishes their houses […] to nourish his children […] said by the troops […/…] fish […] gum, lotus leaves […] excess of food.

Chapter 16

What Ipuwer said when he addressed the Majesty of the Lord of All: 48 […] all herds. It means that ignorance of it is what is pleasing to the heart. You have done what was good in their hearts and you have nourished the people with it. They cover / their faces through fear of the morrow.

That is how a man grows old before dying, while his son is a lad of understanding; he does not open [his] mouth to speak to you, but you seize him in the doom of death […] weep […] go […] after you, that the land may be […] on every side.

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1 There is no-one from the noble families left to maintain order.

2 Ipuwer does not explain what men and ibises have in common, though the context suggests that both are filthy.

3 All government in the south has collapsed; the metaphor of the ship of state sounds very modern.

4 Fish = the corpses the crocodiles are feasting on.

5 Men are so miserable and frightened, that they cannot tell land from water.

6 He dares not wait to see what the reaction to his words will be.

7 Keftiu = Crete.

8 i.e. the lucky ones are dead.

9 The play on the word "noise" is a literary device, presumably meaning anarchy.

10 This is how the Egyptians said "our children in arms." They imagined a child sitting on his father's shoulder and holding onto his neck.

11 The desert plateau, the "Land of the Dead."

12 I.e., Foreigners are squeezing out the native craftsmen.

13 I.e., "I cannot bear to talk about it." The implication is that the rafts bearing myrrh no longer sail on the river.

14 "Them" in the past two sentences means noble-born ladies, who now have to carry burdens and the litters of the new ruling class.

15 The difference in the way this sentence begins suggests that a portion of the text was omitted, and later copyists failed to notice.

16 There must have been some more text omitted here; we cannot tell who Ipuwer means when he uses the plural pronoun "your."

17 Literally "killed in wrongness."

18 A verb is missing here.

19 The Egyptian Supreme Court.

20 Probably the offices of the Vizier and his staff.

21 I.e., When the wise man decides what to do, the fool opposes him, and the ignorant onlooker enjoys the argument.

22 The dead king.

23 The sarcophagus.

24 The cobra-symbol of royalty.

25 The meaning of this sentence is obscure.

26 The protective spirit that guards the royal family.

27 Here is a major blank space. The scribe probably saw a lacuna when copying the original.

28 They take the people's offerings of livestock for their own use.

29 Another blank space.

30 I.e. they are in disorder.

31 Images of Horus; Ipuwer may be referring to the outbuildings of a temple.

32 It is not clear what belongs here and in the previous gap.

33 A ritual purification of an idol in a shrine. All sentences start with "Remember" except the first. The king should perform his religious duties for the well-being of the land. Ipuwer apparently had the same attitude as Confucius; both felt that if the monarch did his religious duties, good times would follow.

34 To purify the mouth.

35 On the shrine of the god.

36 The dates of the regular religious festivals.

37 Egyptians believed the heart was the seat of thought, not the brain.

38 The pronoun "you" is plural.

39 The supreme god.

40 Perhaps meaning that women get pregnant but they no longer bear children.

41 The supreme god again.

42 Ipuwer is in effect telling the king, "If everything had not gone to ruin, with people starving, I would not have sought this audience." The proverb which follows sounds like the more modern saying: "It is no good kicking against the goad."

43 The prevailing misery.

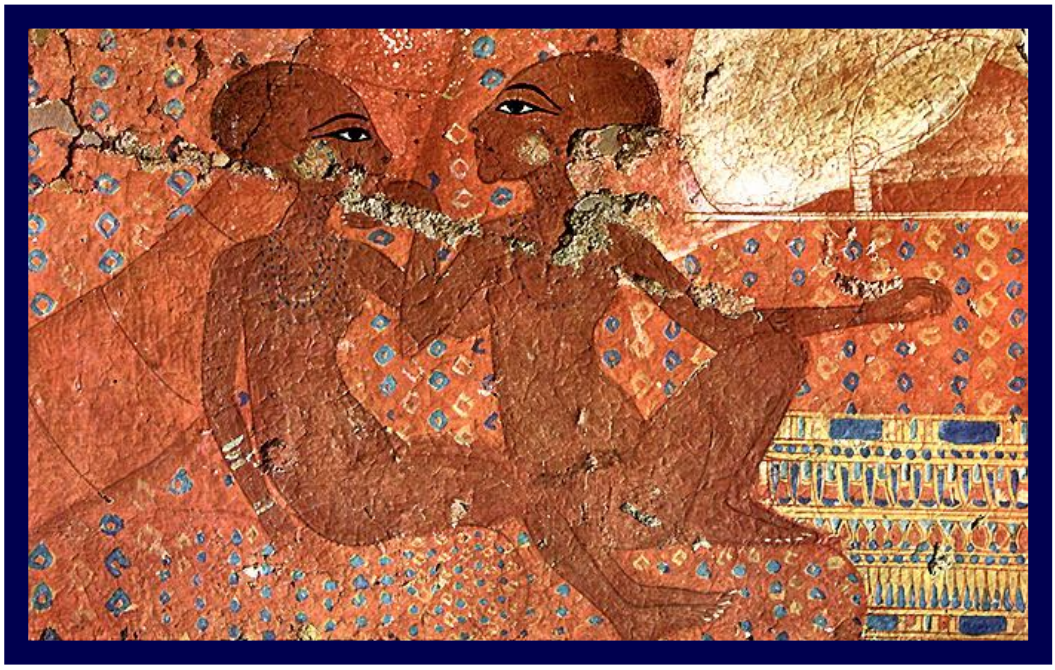
44 I.e. "Answer me back and reject my reproaches."

45 Meaning perhaps: "well clad, well washed and well fed."

46 A Nubian tribe employed as soldiers and police.

47 I.e. overawed by the collapse of a once great state.

48 The king's response to the preceding indictments is not given; evidently the text's purpose was to preserve Ipuwer's speeches.

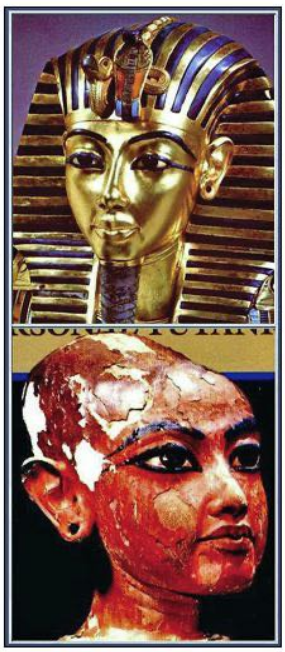


After our discussion of the Exodus saga, we now focus on the discoveries from that period in ancient Egypt itself, which offers interesting points of contact with the Biblical account.

2.9 – A Divina Comedia

I would like to direct your attention once more to Lennart Möller's "The Exodus Case". At the end of his introduction he writes that attempts to destroy documentation were made from various sides by people not normally interested in archaeological investigations. It would not surprise me if this had something to do with the fact that he was able to make a convincing link between the Exodus and the 18th Dynasty of Pharaohs. At present that era is seen by the New Age movement as extremely interesting, being the most glorious period of the higher knowledge, whose occultism and the whole caboodle would be a blessing for our moribund society. Their greatest desire is to pour out the 'life-saving' knowledge and practices over us like a flood.[82)] The competition that Moses won, in which he measured up God's powers with those of the court magicians, does not fit into this image. Only at the last moment, and too late!, did the Egyptians come to the realisation that they had not been fighting Moses the magician but God Himself. (Ex. 14:21-26) The readers know beforehand what the outcome of the struggle is to be, which places

82) God's enemies would far prefer to pour out all their wicked knowledge and practices over us like a flood. The Dutch Staten translation of the Bible reads in Isaiah 59:19 that the enemy will come like a flood but that God will hold it back by means of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The text states: "The Holy Spirit will set up a banner against them". The Hebrew word used here for 'banner' is related to 'seeking a safe haven' (under the banner) in the meaning of Psalm 62, where God offers the believer a high place of refuge or a fortress. The text in Isaiah is a classic example of the room that Hebrew leaves for alternative translations, since in the Willibrord translation (1975), which is also correct, it is not the enemy who comes like a flood but God himself.



them at a disadvantage in imagining all the details, but this does not make the story any the less exciting. What appears to go without saying as far as we are concerned is not necessarily so for the players in this divina comedia. The people of the time may well have been stupid in their hearts but stupid in their minds they most certainly were not. Their way of thinking makes it understandable that they ascribed the miracles to Moses himself and not to Yahweh.

A comparable situation occurred in the public life of Jesus. We know of His virgin birth, but that was not known at the time. Knowing that Joseph was descended from the required Davidic line, the priests could not disqualify Jesus as Messiah: for the long awaited Messiah of Israel He turned out to have a suitable adoptive father who would also have been a suitable natural father. Jesus proclaimed openly that He was the Son of God – or that God was His Father – and although people understood from that that He was making Himself God's equal, it did not occur to them that the truth could be concealed in that claim. And that was in any case not obvious since the people believed that they knew Joseph to be His natural father. From this point of view it is not deicide that the Jews can be accused of but the murder of a great prophet of whom it could have been suspected that He was the Messiah. But those blinded in their hearts saw Jesus as a magician, just as the Egyptians had seen Moses. For this reason Jesus the magician was not allowed to work on the Sabbath. Moreover, some of those who belonged to the highest religious congregation of the time, which itself consisted of magicians, saw in Him a henchman of Satan. (Mk. 3:2, 22) Rabbi Yochanan taught that *"Nobody should be appointed to the Sanhedrin who is not tall of stature, is a wise master, fully versed in visions, of honourable age and has mastered magic…"* (Bab. Sanh. 17a) It was only after Jesus had raised his friend Lazarus from the dead that He had to be liquidated, because then it had become very awkward explaining to the good folks that He was merely a magician who broke the rules of orderly religious observance (Jn. 11:48-50). In other words, magic was permitted within the Jewry of the time, but a magician had to keep to the rules laid down by the scriptural scholars.

A tricky problem is that Jesus healed on the Sabbath. Jesus defended towards the religious caste his 'work' of healing on Sabbath days with arguments derived from the Jewish interpretative tradition, the so-called Halacha, which establishes what is acceptable, being called for, or what is forbidden. The New Testament is actually a masterpiece of Halachitic tradition. A careful study reveals that our Lord and Master always followed the sometimes extremely complicated norms of law.[83)] Jesus was criticised unjustly, unless one accepts that He was a magician, who in carrying out the routine of his profession produced a partial healing. But our Saviour healed completely for both body and soul, and by this fact He underlined his Messianic claims. (John 7:23, Luc. 5:20-25) And this was to be considered an intolerable argument for the supervisory institution! His divine mission was de-

nied as it had happened with Moses. And therefore Jesus was accused of the transgression of the Sabbath command and therefore He was not allowed to call God his Father, in whose mission He stood. (John 5:17-18) On the surface this appears a strange accusation, for in those days to call God 'father' was quite normal.[84)]

To defend his mission, even on a Sabbath, Jesus used to point at the saying of Hosea 6:6, where works of loving kindness and mercy (chesed) have priority over sacrifice. The bringing of sacrifice, on it turn, has priority over the Sabbath ideal. Indeed, the priests and their Temple servants do work on a Sabbath in order to fulfill their mission with all its sacrifices and the accompanying sanctification ritual. (Mt. 12:5) The day after his six days' of creation, God rested from his work, a day that in Biblical parlance is still going on, but in spite of that He never stopped works of mercy, reconciliation, sanctification and justice, and that also applies for God's work to uphold the work of creation that was done already. The foregoing illustrates what kind of human work is allowed on the Lord's day, yes 'must' be done. Because of this and after having wrought a number of healings on sabbaths, Jesus could say after the miracle of curing the lame: *"My Father worketh even until now, and I (do his type of) work."* (John 5:17) [85)] God's work differs from ours because it extends beyond the limits of the laws of nature, which exceeds the works of both the common man and the magician. During the third plague of Egypt, the Bible recounts: *"All the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt. And the magicians did so with their enchantments to bring forth lice, but they could not: so there were lice upon man, and upon beast. Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh: This is the finger of God!"* (Ex. 8:17-19) With the previous plagues – first the Nile turning into blood and then the plague of the frogs – the magicians could do the same, though they could not stop the

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83) See "The Sabbath Conflicts in John" of the Torah Club Volume IV (part 2 of 2) – First Fruits of Zion (www.ffoz.org) # 2010-11. The article also appeared in the Messiah Journal, Issue 106, spring 2011/5771 (pp. 26-43).

84) Gerald Blidstein says in the beginning of his book from 2006 "Honor thy father and mother: filial responsibility in Jewish law and ethics" that in Judaism God is called Father because He is the creator, life-giver, law-giver, and protector.

85) The Jewish Halacha teaches that when someone leaves his house on a Sabbath, he may carry nothing but his own clothing on his shoulders. Only things are allowed to be worn that are absolutely necessary. Even such a trivial thing as a handkerchief must be left home. However, if it rains on a Sabbath and someone leaves, then a person may wear a raincoat and may continue to do so after the sky clears up, in fact carry it, in spite that the item has become useless. If the person happens to come home, the raincoat may be layed down, though one is not allowed to go home 'in order to' lay it down. The same line of reasoning applies for an old man who has stiff legs in the morning. In this case he is allowed to use a walking stick, even on a Sabbath, because he does not carry the stick, but the stick carries him. When the walking improves throughout the day, a point arrives when the stick is not necessary any more and then the old man starts to carry the stick instead of the stick carrying him. As with the raincoat he is allowed to carry the stick until he gets home. This explains why the lame of Bethesda (house of mercy), who Jesus had cured on a Sabbath day, had to carry his bed (or mat) with him, about which the Jewish leadership said (John 5:10-11): "This is the Sabbath! No one is allowed to carry a mat on the Sabbath. But he replied: The man who healed me, told me to pick up my mat and walk." Jesus was Halachicly right to let him carry his bed, now that the bed did not carry him any more, for the situation had arisen out of circumstances, the same as with the old man and the stick.

plagues. Jesus not only did God's 'type' of work, He did God's work itself. A benifactory exclaimed: *"Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind!"* (John 9:32) Therefore, Jesus could say: *"The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath day."* (Mt. 12:8) Indeed, for these kind of works the Sabbath is the day par excellence.

Tut-Ankh-Amon

Queen Tiye

2.10 – The Chronological Succession of the Pharaohs

It is of importance that the Exodus is traceable to the 18th Dynasty. First of all, the Egyptian chariot wheels lying on the bed of the Gulf of Aqaba point to this chronology (see previous article). Möller also knew from other evidence that that had to be the period in question. It is, he says, a known fact thanks to a medical papyrus bearing an astronomical indication that the eleventh month of the ninth year of Amenhotep I (the second Pharaoh of the 18th Dynasty) fell exactly in 1510 BC, which is of essential importance for our calculation, like those of footnote 70.[86)] The establishment of the date of 1510 BC depends on the place from where the observation of the astronomical phenomenon (the heliacal rising of Sothis) was made. In this case it was Memphis, where the residential palace was situated at the time.

At present known as Sirius, the star Sothis is the apparently brightest star in the sky. The ancient Egyptians recognised that the rising of Sothis, just before dawn in midsummer, marked the time when the River Nile begins to overflow and bring fertile sediments to the agricultural fields, making it a very important benchmark, so important that it marked the beginning of the Egyptian New Year. As it turns out, the rising of Sothis is a perfect benchmark of the sidereal year, which is slightly longer than a tropical year. Our Gregorian calendar is based on the latter. The difference between the two is caused by the precession of the equinoxes (when day and night are of equal length). One sidereal year is roughly equal to (1 + 1/26,000) or 1.000039 tropical year.[87)]

86) For the dating that is apparent from the medical papyrus, Lennart Möller refers to the New Encyclopaedia Britannica (15th ed. 1985), I presume under the heading of Amenhotep I. The relevant quote from the encyclopaedia is to be found on 113 1st ed. and p. 117 4th ed. of his book.

Sirius and Orion above Elbus Mountain - Iran, Jan. 25, 2008
Sirius is the brightest star (photo Antoon's Foobar)

According to Panin's chronology the Exodus started in 1486 BC and according to the chronology followed by Möller in approximately 1446 BC.[88)] Möller manages to argue convincingly that the title Amenhotep was reserved for the pharaoh; that of Tut-Mozes for the crown prince, who also co-ruled, and who changed his name to Amenhotep whenever he ascended the throne (Amon means 'the hidden one', which is another name for Ra, and hotep means 'is pleased'). After a detailed study, he concludes that Moses was known as Tut-Mozes II destined to become Amenhotep II, but we know that this never happened. Amenhotep III would then be the pharaoh of the Red Sea debacle. According to the Panin

87) As regards a discussion on the year of the rising of Sothis in Memphis, see: "A History of Ancient Egypt" by Nicolas Grimal, Librairie Arthéme Fayard # 1988 (p. 202). Of interest is Peter James' book "Centuries of Darkness (A Challenge to the Conventional Chronology of Old World Archaeology)" - London # 1991, conceived in collaboration with I. J. Thorpe, Nikos Kokkinos, and Robert Morkot & John Frankish. Peter James and consorts state: "This is the only book to provide a serious alternative to the accepted dating of ancient Egypt and the Near East [Bronze to Iron Age]. This highly controversial study rodcked the foundations of ancient chronology. As a result Mediterranean and Biblical archaeology are now in turmoil." (http://www.centuries.co.uk/index.htm)

chronology, there are 42 years between the 9th year of Amenhotep I and the Red Sea passage, and so Moses fled from the face of Amenhotep in his 11th regal year (Moses returned in Egypt after 40 years). Bruce's estimate matches up less well because the distance

Sirius and a comet, photo Michael Karrer

of 64 years between the measuring points is too great, though it is still within reasonable limits.[89)] Before the Biblical Moses acceded to the title of Tut-Moses he had a different name, probably Senmut, meaning 'mother's brother'. This name fits an adoptive son well because according to the legend of Horus it indicates that the child was the reincarnation of his dead father, the former spouse and also brother of his adoptive mother, and that Senmut the interloper, alias Moses, could make rightful claim to the throne, despite the

88) For his Biblical chronology Lennart Möller refers to F.F. Bruce: "Israel and the Nations" # 1963. The same Bruce is also quoted in "The Bible, Word of God" nr. 3. The Panin chronology is not approximate, like the one used by Bruce, but exact, on condition of advancing the date of the Messiah's birth by two years in response to the ardent prayer of the Virgin Mary (cf. A. K. Emmerick), all Panin's dates fall two years later in time, whereby too another date of Jesus' birth is discounted. My date is 8 BC and Panin's 4 BC. These data synchronise the Anno Mundi calendar with the Gregorian. The Anno Mundi calendar starts with the creation of Adam. The Gregorian calendar is the one we currently use and starts at an erroneously assumed date for the birth of Jesus. These differences count in the questions of succession in the 18th Dynasty. For Jesus' date of the birth of see: "Proofs of the Life and Death of Jesus".

89) According to the Bible Moses fled from Egypt when he was 40 and returned to save his people when he was 80. The Panin chronology shows that Moses fled in the 11th year of Amenhotep's reign (1510-1468-40+9=11), from which it follows that he was 30 when, together with his mother as co-regent, he became Tut-Moses. The Bruce chronology gives the following: Moses fled in the 33rd year of the Pharaoh's reign and was 7 when he became Tut-Moses. Möller cheats by adding 11 years in order to make Moses 18 when he became Tut-Moses, from which it follows that he fled in the 22nd year of the Pharaoh's reign. On page 121 1st ed. and p. 127 4th ed. of the "Exodus Case" there is a passage that apparently was corrected after the decision had been taken to add those 11 years: "Moses started to build his funerary monument when he became Tut-Moses at the age of 33." The following should have been written: "According to the timetable reproduced here, Moses was able to work for 22 years on his funerary monument from the time that he became Tut-Moses, a function to which he was raised on his 18th birthday."

jealous looks of pretenders. The Egyptian annals tell us that Senmut was a commoner but that he quickly climbed the ladder to become (co)-regent of Egypt thanks to his adoptive mother. It is also known that his natural parents had no role of any significance. Exceptionally enough, he never married and the same Senmut, as the annals report, was suddenly deprived of all his privileges and he disappeared under mysterious circumstances. This, and much more relating to Senmut, rhymes wonderfully well with the Biblical canon. Of the renowned Hatsheput we know that after six years of regency she took on the pharaonic title of Khnemet-Amon ('united with Amon'). This was possibly related to the sudden disappearance of Moses or Tut-Moses II, and possibly too to the fact that his successor was still too young to rule.[90)] To put it briefly, there are sufficient grounds to assume that the Exodus took place during the 18th Dynasty and that the Pharaoh involved was Amenhotep III, the penultimate member of this famous family.

2.11 – The Egyptian Condition after the Red Sea debâcle

It goes without saying that the Pharaoh and his army were only too pleased to take part in the expedition to punish the Hebrews, who had only just started out on their Exodus. Since the final plague had killed all the first-born, everyone had a personal vendetta against that crew of goat milkers.[91)] An inscription tells us that Amenhotep's first-born was the famous Tut-Ankh-Amon. So he was the one who died in the plague![92)] Developments in Egypt following the Red Sea debacle are fascinating. Pharaoh had disappeared together with all his noblemen. Once again the empire was confronted with problems of succession, extremely acute problems. Disaster after disaster had battered the country. Lennart Möller quotes an interesting letter in which Tiye, the widow of Amenhotep III,[93)] asks the Hittite king Suppiluliumas for a son to marry, an unheard of request that was met with a great deal of suspicion. Was it perhaps a trick designed to lead to a conflict? The queen replied: *"Why do you say: 'They are trying to mislead us? If I had a son surely I would not write to a foreign power in terms so humiliating for me and for my country? You do not believe me and you say so yourself! He who was my husband is dead and I have no son. Do I then have to take one of my servants and make him my spouse? I have written to no other*

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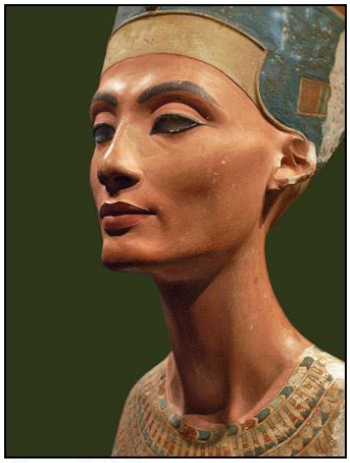
90) Here I would opt for the following timetable rather than that proposed by Lennart Möller: "Amenhotep I ruled for another 6 years after Moses fled, which brings his rule up to 17 years. Subsequently Hatsheput becomes Pharaoh for a period of 5 years, after which she relinquished the throne in favour of Amenhotep II who, at the time, had apparently reached the required age. After a reign of 10 years Amenhotep II died. Amenhotep III then became Pharaoh, only to die 19 years later at the Red Sea crossing. When considering this rapid succession, we need to keep in mind the fact that according to current knowledge the average Egyptian in that period had a lifespan of only 35 years."

91) The expression "crew of goat milkers" translates the attitude of the Egyptians who had a very low opinion of cattle herders. The Egyptians were themselves arable farmers. Even today the greatest ideal that an Egyptian can have is to own piece of farmland.

92) One might think that the pharao, challenged by Moses, was not a first-born, for he stayed alive. Yet "The Ancient Book of Jasher" informs us (80:57): "Moses said to Pharaoh, behold, though thou art thy mother's firstborn, yet fear not, for thou wilt not die, for the Lord has commanded that thou shalt live, in order to show thee his great might and strong stretched out arm."

country. I wrote to you…" Suppiluliumas allowed himself to be persuaded by Tiye and sent a marriageable son. Möller suggests that by taking this step Tiye could have been attempting to make friendship with the warlike Hittites before they discovered that the Egyptian army was but a paper tiger. This could have given the Egyptian regime an alibi for a non-intervention pact, a supposition that matches a letter from the Amarna archive showing that Egypt was no longer prepared to provide military assistance to its

Eye Nefertite



Queen Nefertite

Syro-Palestinian vassals against the advancing Hittites, despite the desperate pleas for help. Here Möller ends his treatment of Egypt and concentrates further on the vicissitudes of the people of Israel. For the New Age adepts things start to get interesting at this point, for according to them the most renowned era of the higher knowledge culminated in the successor, the heretic Amenhotep IV, who was married to Nefertiti 'the perfect one'.[94)] She was co-regent and may have ruled for some time alone as Smenkhkara after the death of her husband. And thereby the 18th Dynasty came to its end. The closing phase under that couple is very special and is known as the Amarna period.

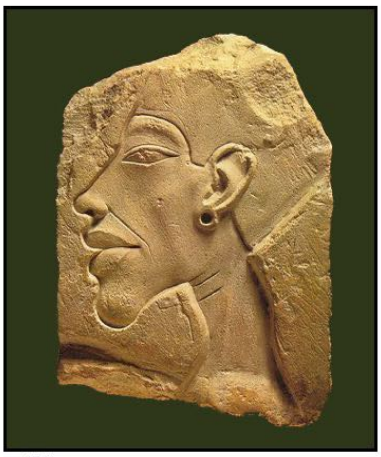
Most of the books about ancient Egypt also deal with the Amarna period. In the fifth year of his reign Amenhotep IV took three decisive measures, to which the recent happenings

93) According to Möller the letter quoted could not be from Tiye because she was Akhen-Aton's mother. But he loses sight of the fact that she could have adopted a son and daughter – orphaned by the recent catastrophes – from the pharaonic family. The strange skeletal anomalies, including an absurdly large elongated skull and amazing hip dimensions, prove that Akhen-Aton and Nefertiti were both of the pharaonic line. Their daughter Meritaten had the same kind of skull. That their skulls are humanoid is proven by its excesssive brain volume (deformation does not affect volume), eye sockets that are ±25% larger, thinner bone, but most importantly: the absense of the sagittal suture, and secondly, the foramen magnum is situated much further backward (to provide equilibrium). Tiye, on the other hand, was a commoner with normal cranial features. (Prof. Joann Fletcher and her team were able to identify the skeletons of these three in 2003.)

94) Usually Nefertiti is rendered as 'beautiful woman' but it should be 'the perfect one'.

in his kingdom will not have been strangers: he changed his name to Akhen-Aton, meaning 'glory of the Aton (sun) disc' and started the construction of a city on virgin territory, to be known as Amarna and which must have housed approximately 35,000 inhabitants at the time. He also announced that thenceforth only Aton was to be adored, to the exclusion of the entire pantheon. Even Amon-Ra was no longer to be adored. The people and the priestly caste hated this experiment. And thus after the death of Akhen-Aton and Nefertiti every effort was made to wipe out all memories of the fact and their city was abandoned.

Generally, the established dating of a 'possible' Exodus is in the extreme placed after the 18th Dynasty, and therefore the scientific establishment tends to ascribe the invention of monotheism to this Pharaoh and to assume that Israel's cult was a pale shadow of this. In the adoration of Aton there is no question of an exclusive doctrine. Hence in the strictest sense it was not a monotheism but a monolatry, i.e. the worship of a single god without the principle that an alternative type of worship being regarded as excluded. According to this definition Einstein was a monolatrist. He worshipped reason, and that was an option from among many. Based on Einstein's correspondence, the Nobel laureate Ilya Prigogine concludes: *"Einstein believed in the god of Spinoza, a god identified with nature, a god of supreme rationality."* ("From being to becoming", p. 210)



Akhnaton

Tel Amarna was discovered at the end of the 19th century and the first book dealing with it was written by Sir Flinders Petrie in 1894, with "*Tell el-Amarna*" as its title. The psychologist Sigmund Freud was quick to write*: "If Moses was an Egyptian and if he passed on his own belief to the Jews, it must most certainly have been that of Akhen-Aton, the Aton religion." Petrie wrote in exceptionally laudatory words about Akhen-Aton: "Even now the world is not yet ripe for such a one".* The famous and modern Egyptologist James Breasted calls him the most remarkable figure in Antiquity. The songs in praise of Aton, repeatedly compared to Psalm 104, are seen by many as an indication that in this Pharaoh we are dealing with the most impressive personality in Antiquity, even before there was any thought of Hebrews. One of the odes says in characteristic fashion: "*Praise to you! As You climb up above the horizon, O living Aton, lord of eternity. Obedience is shown to You as You pass along the heavens lighting all lands with Your beauty (...) when You rise you grant [to the king] eternal life; when You go down You give him a place for ever. You bear him at dawn in the likeness of Your image*". Indeed, a beautiful piece of self-congratulatory prose, but no more sublime than, for instance, the older songs in praise of Ra. And there are earlier texts with more striking comparisons between the Egyptian and the Israelite wisdom and story-telling literature. The parallels are unmistakeable but the chronology must be respected if sensible conclusions are to be made! And then it appears to be the other way round, that the Egyptians copied the Amarna religion from the Hebrews.

APPENDIX 13

« The Finding of the Lost Ark of the Covenant »

By Arthur & Rosalind Eedle (Lincolnshire, Engeland)

THE PROPHETIC TELEGRAPH No.78, Jan. 1996 (with amendments by Hubert Luns)

At the end of 1995, when writing for The Prophetic Telegraph (#73), I closed with a mention of the possible discovery of the Ark of the Covenant. I have since been able to verify this and found conclusive evidence to that effect. My earlier account contained a number of errors. For example, I had assumed that it was Jonathan Gray who made the discovery in 1982 whereas in fact it was Ron Wyatt (†1999) from Nashville Tennessee. I'd like to apologise for that. This error was due to the scant information available two months earlier. And now, in this issue I like to share the facts as revealed by Jonathan Gray in his address at a London church on Saturday, Oct 7, 1995, which we learned about via video. And we also listened to a speech by Ron Wyatt himself.

Introduction

This is the amazing story of the discovery of the legendary Ark of the Covenant that was the religious focus of attention of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness and Solomon's Temple, down to the time when in the 6th century BC Nebuchadnezzar's armies had ransacked Jerusalem. After that, there is no mention of the Ark in the Bible. One of the aprocryphal books mentions that Prophet Jeremiah in that time hid the Ark of the Covenant in a cave atop Mount Nebo to prevent the Babylonian army from capturing it. The passage reads:

> «« It was also in the same document that the Prophet Jeremiah had been commanded by divine inspiration that the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant should be taken by him when going up to the summit of the mountain, the same one that Moses had ascended to see God's Promised Land. Having arrived, Jeremiah found a cave-dwelling to which he had the Tent, the Ark, and the Altar of Incense brought, after which he hid the entrance from view. Some of those who followed him came up intending to mark the way, but could not find the spot. When Jeremiah learned of it, he rebuked them and declared: *"The place shall remain unknown until God gathers His people together again and shows His mercy. Only then the Lord will disclose these things."* »» (2 Macc. 2:4-8)

Indeed, the Ark of the Covenant was discovered at the designated time, that is, at the time in which we live today. But it totally escaped my notice to date. It turned out that the Ark had already been discovered on Jan. 6th 1982, exactly 14 years ago. This was not made public at the request of the Israeli government. Although I do not to know all the ins and outs, I understand that permission was recently given to disclose the find, but not yet the exact location. Perhaps, God willing, now is the time to announce to the world the Ark and its precious contents (the two tablets of the law) through of the official media.[95)]

Before beginning the sensational story of its discovery, I like to say that the whole incident is compassed by miracles. God has set His seal on this most sacred artifact of the past. Clearly, it has great significance for the days we are living in, whether substantiated by facts or as far as its deeper meaning is concerned. Its impact on global Judaism can hardly be overestimated.

The Ark of the Covenant must be in there!

The story begins in 1978, when Ron Wyatt was swimming in the sea at Ashkelon, one of the ancient cities of the Philistines at the westcoast of Israel. He stubbed his toe on something, and found that it was the rim of a large earthenware pot. Further investigation revealed that it was a Canaanite burial pot, the like of which archaeologist had long been searching for but had hitherto not found. When this news was brought to the Director of Antiquities in Jerusalem, he was delighted, and the event, seemingly 'by accident', proved to be the means of cementing a relationship which, as appeared later, was to serve a higher purpose.

A short while afterwards, Ron was standing talking to the Director of Antiquities, facing the cliff that, as it turned out, was the true Golgotha or Calvary (both mean place of the skull in respectively Hebrew and Latin). Suddenly Ron found his arm shooting out, and he pointed saying: *"There is Jeremiah's Grotto - that rubbish heap - the Ark of the Covenant must be in there!"* Besides, Jeremiah's Grotto or Heap was a new appellation, which did not appear anywhere in the common writings. The Director answered spontaneously:

95) Side note by Hubert Luns: After this article had lain in my archives for more than twenty five years, the time seems to have come to give it wider publicity because now, as from July 2023, The Warning, also called The Enlightenment of Conscience, is imminent. As predicted, the Jews will thereafter accept Jesus Christ, the Crucified One, in large numbers as their Messiah. With this, it is fitting that the Ark of the Covenant, which is still hidden beneath Golgotha and on which Christ's blood of atonement was poured out, will then be revealed by the Israelite government.

"Then you must find It." Ron was surprised at himself. He had no thought in his mind about the Ark and couldn't understand why he had made the remark. This is miracle number one and the Director's enthusiastic response and request for him to find the Ark is miracle number two - a most unlikely offer, seeing it was given to a foreigner and that it concerned THE most sacred sought-after artifact in the Jewish world.

However, Ron needed to get back to the States, and a whole year went by before he returned with two others to begin the dig. Meeting again with the Director he learned that the site was jointly owned by an Arab and a European. Both needed to give permission to excavate the site. Most surprisingly, BOTH gave that permission without even asking what they were looking for! This is miracle number three.

The excavation work

And so in that year, 1979, the laborious and agonizingly slow job of removing tons of accumulated waste began. Their dig was more or less in front of the 'Skull' and quite near to the Garden Tomb.[96] Beginning at the top of the escarpment, they painstakingly removed load after load of rubbish, and eventually came upon a ledge in which they found three post-holes hacked out of the rock. Each of these holes measured about 13 inches square, and were some two feet deep. Furthermore, each hole had a 'plug' in the top, which contained finger holes for easy removal. It left no doubt what they had discovered: **the site of the Crucifixion**. The execution poles were descended in these holes that were closed after being used.

Behind the post holes was a cliff face and at a height of about 12 feet there were niches chiselled into the rock on which could be set the details of the crimes committed by those who were crucified.[97] The middle one was clearly the most significant, and reserved for the worst criminal. The Bible says that Pilate ordered them to write: *"This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews",* a derogatory statement that infuriated Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, but they had no authority to change it. Amongst the rubbish they found coins, none of which was more recent than the year 130, which shows that the site was then covered up and put in disuse. This fits in with history, as the destruction of Jerusalem came at the Bar Cochba revolt in 132-135 AD.

Further excavation at this level revealed the remains of a building measuring 40 feet out from the cliff-face, and 22 feet wide, that had at one time been constructed over the central post hole. It is believed that this was a chapel used by the first Christians, who worshipped the sacrificial site of their master. This idea gained more substance by the discovery of a

96) The Garden Tomb is adjacent to a rocky escarpment, which since the mid-19th century had been proposed to be Golgotha, but this was never taken seriously.

97) Ron suggested that perhaps these niches were for tablets on which the crimes committed were written. Such an announcement was known as the the 'titulus'. John's Gospel seems to indicate that the titulus was nailed to the cross itself, but not necessarily so, for the Greek says: "epi tou staurou". The preposition epi is in the genitive, which can be translated as 'above' instead of 'upon'. Ron's suggestion is therefore acceptable. Both Luke's and Matthew's Gospel say that the titulus was "above His head", which can be understood in different ways.

huge round stone on the floor of this building, quite near to the post hole. The stone measured 13 feet in diameter, and was almost 2 feet thick. It was known that stones of this sort were used to roll in front of rock-cut tombs. This one was truly huge, weighing 4.4 tonnes!

Ron Wyatt began searching near the Garden Tomb, also known as Gordon's Tomb. This was found in 1882 by General Gordon on the way back from his Chinese campaign. Gordon had doubts about the traditional crucifixion site at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, where Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great, had found the True Cross in the year 326. Nonetheless, it could not qualify as Calvary, since at 26 AD that place was situated INSIDE the habitation, while according to John 19:17 and Hebrews 13:12 it should have been outside. Ron's Place of the Skull lies to the northwest, just beyond the Damascus Gate at the main road to Samaria and meets the condition of OUTSIDE JERUZALEM. Thus, Ron's search led to the actual place where Jesus was crucified and also buried!

Incontrovertible evidence

During the excavation, as noted, two holes were exposed in the wall, just 13 feet 2 inches apart, into which iron bars had been inserted as 'seals' of the tomb, which was thus located at the execution site itself or very nearby. The iron bar on the right, as you face the tomb, was missing, but the left one was still there and showed all the signs of having been broken off by a mighty hand. This clearly indicated that the enormous stone, lying in the chapel above, was the one that had covered the entrance to Jesus' tomb. It was very heavy, as the Scriptures declare, and one that would have taken many men to roll it back, slightly up the slope to the left hand side. But whoever moved the more than four-ton stone did so WITHOUT removing the two-inch-thick iron rod. It was thus the work of the Angel, who, we are told, *"rolled back the stone"*, a conclusion that the High Priests must have reached too, which is why the soldiers standing guard were not punished. Incidentally, the stone could not have been rolled to the right because a heavy block had been fixed into the gully to arrest the stone being rolled into position. Quite recently, the tomb of Herod the Great was found in Jerusalem,[98)] and its keystone measured 4.5 feet, that is slightly more than one third of the of the huge stone that Joseph of Arimathea had made for his own tomb, which he had so generously offered to serve as Jesus' 'final' resting place.

Thus far, excavation had yielded conclusive evidence that this is the true site of the crucifixion and that the early church had built a memorial chapel at that site on top of the large stone. It had already been known that Skull Hill was the traditional site for burials, Moslem, Jewish, and Christian and that in ancient times it served to stone criminals. In the Mishna it is called 'Beth ha-Sekelah', literally 'House of Stoning'. This is where Stephen must have been stoned to death. It was also considered the public execution site of Jewish criminals. As late as the beginning of the 20th century Jews would spit at the hill, throw stones, and curse Jesus as the *"destroyer of their nation".* All this is clear evidence that it is the true scene of Christ's crucifixion and also of His burial.

98) Finally, in 2007, Ehud Netzer of Hebrew University announced that after 35 years of archaeological work irrefutable evidence existed of Herod's resting place. "A New Discovery may solve the Mystery of the Bible's Bloodiest Tyrant" trumpeted the London Daily Mail.

Further investigation revealed another important fact. In the middle post hole, that of Jesus' Cross, they found a rock fissure on the left. This was evidence of the earthquake that occurred when Jesus died. This finding was of supreme importance, but they did not realize it until much later. The excavators first had to find the entrance to the cave where the Ark was hidden. The work was exhausting and went slowly because the debris had to be hauled away laboriously, cargo after cargo. After two years of digging, the three men had grown weary and somewhat discouraged. By this time they were digging a narrow trench against the rock face with room for one man at a time. So they took turns working, while the other two could take a rest on the ground above.

The Ark of the Covenant is found

Despite the monotony of the labor and deploying reluctance, they stubbornly persevered and hacked their way until having reached a point where the entrance to a cave seemed to be. It did not represent much, but was large enough to give a glimmer of hope. It was Jan. 6th 1982, and it was four years after Ron had exclaimed to the Director, being guided by providence, about Jeremiah's Grotto. Energetically they hacked through, to make the entrance wider but the cleared hole was still too small to crawl through. Ron handed a flashlight to a frail young man, the son of the Arab who was joint-owner of the land. He managed to crawl inside, but he quickly shot back and looked dead white as a ghost. "What's in there? What's in there!?" he exclaimed, and has ever since refused to talk about what he had seen. The opening was enlarged until Ron could crawl through it. It was two o'clock in the afternoon. He appeared to have entered a room with many heaped stones with a depth of 22 feet to the back, 14 feet wide and about 8 feet from floor to ceiling. There in front of him were the sacred objects from Solomon's Temple: the Altar of Burnt Offering, the Table of Showbreads, and the Altar of Incense. They were covered with skins. Over them were pieces of wood topped with lumps of rock and stones.

Excitement running high, Ron inched his way over the pile of stones to the back of the cave. His flashlight caught sight of a crack in the ceiling, on which a black substance was deposited. Immediately beneath this was the cover of a large stone case which extended almost up to the roof. On the top of the case was a flat freestone slab, but this had cracked in two, and the smaller part had moved a little aside and was situated just beneath the crack in the roof. The black substance was also on the lid, on the spot where the crack was situated. Suddenly the whole scenario fell into place. The black substance ought to have been the BLOOD fallen through the crack onto – onto what? ONTO THE MERCY SEAT ON TOP THE ARK OF THE COVENANT,[99)] which was safely kept in that huge stone coffer. This is miracle number four. Ron collapsed and remained unconscious for three quarters of an hour. Coming to his senses, he crawled out and told of the mind boggling discovery. The Director of Antiquities was informed, and he hurried to the site. When he tried to enter the cave, his back collapsed and he had to be taken to the hospital where he remained paralysed for nearly two weeks. He intimated that never again he would attempt to enter Jeremiah's Grotto to behold the Ark, and by implication neither for the people who were under his authority. This is miracle number five. Why so? Because the Ark had to remain hidden from prying eyes until the Israeli authorities had established a protocol for the proper course of action should the world's political-religious situation warrant it.

Some time later, Ron took a special drill to make a tiny hole in the stone casing. Using a colonoscope, he could observe the Ark in its enclosure, particularly the cornice around the Mercy Seat. This showed indisputably that the Ark was stored in this container. On another occasion, he pushed a steel measuring tape upwards through the crack, where it emerged at the cross-hole. His assistent grabbed it to alert Ron that it had come through. The tape indicated that the crack extended through 20 feet of solid rock!

After the large pile of stones was cleared, Ron took pictures of the cave with his Polaroid camera. After 90 seconds development the picture was found to be fogged, not entirely but just over the portion where the stone container stood that housed the Ark. He then tried using his 35 mm camera. When these photos came out they showed the same fogginess. A video camera gave the same effect. Something strange was going on that caused the artefact to be hidden from the outside world. This is miracle number six. I have seen the footage of this video, and all is clearly visible except where the container rests, for in front of it there is a golden mist. Ron drew in on the image the outline of what he had observed with his own eyes. In the drawing, the cherubim are of human form and hold their outspread wings over the Ark.

Priest with Ephod

The items that Ron was able to identify next to the ones already mentioned, were as follows: the golden Menorah (seven-branched candelabrum), a very large sword, the Ephod (breast plate with 12 stones), a mitre with an ivory pomegranate on the tip, a shekel weight and a number of oil lamps. The sword could very well be the one used by Goliath. The menorah depicted as a conquest booty on the Triumphal Arch of Emperor Titus must have been a replica, manufactured after the return from the Babylonian exile. There were other objects as well, but these Ron could not identify these. He certified that the Ark still contains the stone tablets, and that on the back of the Ark is a small open cubicle which contains the intact Scrolls of the Law, written on animal hides.

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99) Jesus entrance in Jerusalem is described in the following manner: “Behold your King is coming to you. Lowly and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey.” The Hebrew for donkey can be seen as an image of redemption for ‘chamor’, a religious impure animal, is written in the same way as ‘chamar’ for pitch. The dull greyish of a donkey reminds the color of pitch, of which the Hebrew also means slime pit, to befoul and to get into trouble, an image of the sins that cleave to us. It also refers to ‘kippur’, the Hebrew for reconciliation and atonement, which is related to smearing (or covering) with pitch. The expression is found in Genesis 6:14 where God instructs Noah to make the Ark and to smear it, or cover it, inside and outside with pitch. It is of interest that atonement in Hebrew is a primery root ‘kaphar’ (the plural of which is kippur, like in Yom Kippur), which means to cover. Noah’s boat of salvation must have been of the same dull greyish as that donkey. Is not it written in Jacob’s testament: “Judah binds his donkey to the vine and his donkey’s colt to the choice vine. He washes his garments in wine and his clothes in the blood of grapes.” He was to become the incorporation of evil for our sake. This passage from Genesis 49:11 was traditionally associated with Jesus, because He says of Himself (John 15:1): “I am the true vine”. In “Ancient Christian Commen¬taries on Scripture” Ambrosius is quoted, who refers back the expression: “He washes his garments in wine and his clothes in the blood of grapes” to Isaiah 49 (esp. verses 18 and 22).

The find was to be kept secret

At this stage, a Jewish official totally unexpected decided that all further work on the excavation site had to stop. It was a severe blow, and Ron and his friends prayed God that He might overrule. The prayer was answered almost immediately, for the man had a heart attack and died. This is miracle number seven.

Another man showed great curiosity and interest in what was going on, and tried to prise out of Ron what he was doing and where he was working, but Ron refused to divulge any information. However, he was determined and followed the party about surrepticiously until he finally saw what they were doing. Calling a press conference for the next day, 9 o'clock in the morning, he made preparations to blast their secret into the open. But that very morning, one hour before, he was found dead in an alley way, in a pool of blood, having been shot by the PLO on some unrelated matter. This is miracle number eight.

When the Jewish authorities learned of this find they were in a quandary. Religious extremists, Jewish and Islamic, were going to take ruthless possession of the Ark if they thought it was the real thing. There has already been an attempt to blow up the Dome of the Rock, the Arab holy site located on top of the supposed place where Abraham had intended to sacrifice his son. The Dome of the Rock stands on the Temple Mount, and many Jews would do anything to remove it and build their new Temple there. The revelation of the whereabouts of the Ark of the Covenant could be the beginning of a turmoil bound to plunge the Middle East into a 'holy war' of unimaginable horror and devastation, as the various parties would seek to appropriate its ownership.

The result was that the Israeli Parliament asked Ron to build a door to the cave, cover it with earth, and plant shrubs to disguise the site. And there it has remained for the last 14 years [and until now for more than 40 years]. I have no idea what they are up to in Israel right now, but if they decide to make the finding of the Ark public, I wonder where it will lead. Will the Lord allow it? The strange happenings so far, indicate that God attaches great importance to his holy 'furniture'.

Jesus' Blood flowed down on the Mercy Seat

But the story does not end here! As mentioned, there was a crack in the rock, on the left in the middle post-hole that must have been caused by an earthquake, and indeed the Bible says that when Jesus gave up the ghost there was a severe earthquake that caused the veil of the Temple to tear in half (due to the swaying of the immense stone pillars between which it hung). It wasn't until Ron Wyatt took a closer look at the whereabouts of the Ark that he realized what he was looking at. There appeared to be a large amount of dried 'human blood' caked to the crack in the ceiling, situated above the top left of the Mercy Seat. In addition, there was also a lot of dried blood on top of the cover plate of the stone container, right on and in the crack itself, which gave access to the Mercy Seat. A probe confirmed that the crack led from the post hole to the crack in the ceiling. Divine providence allowed the sacrificial blood to flow through that channel and through the crack in the storage container to the top of the Mercy Seat (כַּפֹּרֶת kapōret), thus fulfilling the legal condition of the Torah (Old Testament)!

It is written that – AFTER Jesus had died and the rock was torn – a Roman soldier pierced the Lord's side with his spear, penetrating Jesus' heart. The Bible tells that *"blood and water"* gushed forth. The Lord had died of a broken heart, crushed by the agony of carrying the load of this world's sin. His death had not been the normal death of a crucified man. His suffering exceeded that of all others. The two criminals had their legs broken to hasten death, to comply with Jewish law, stipulating that the execution had to be completed before the Sabbath, which on that day would begin at about 6 PM.

And so it was that God the Father had torn the rock to make a way for his Son's blood to flow down from the spear-wound through the newly formed channel onto the very Mercy Seat itself. Now just think about this for a moment. Jeremiah had deposited the Ark in the cave some six centuries earlier, with absolutely no knowledge of the events which were to occur on Good Friday. The Romans who hacked out the post-holes had absolutely no knowledge of what lay beneath their feet, nor that they were positioning the CENTRAL hole in exactly the right place. And until the Lord had died, there was no way for blood to flow down because no channel was there. This unique confluence of circumstances made it possible.

This was not mere happenstance, because everything had to COINCIDE exactly for it to happen that way. Never, there was any human design. It was entirely God's work from Heaven, who knew the end from the beginning, and arranged for it to happen in that way. This is miracle number nine. It is a miracle of miracles.[100)] In the letter to the Hebrews we read: *"It is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin (...) but Thou hast prepared a body for Me (...) and lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. (...) By His own blood He entered in once and for all into the Holy Place having obtained eternal redemption for us."* (Hebr. 10:4-7 and 9:12).

None of the Old Testament sacrifices was able to take away sin. Only the blood of the Son of God could do that. Yet the inadequate sacrifices of the children of Israel were accepted by virtue of their faith in God's words, put in writing in the sacrificial laws. Because Jesus was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (Rev. 13:8), God in his foreknowledge could accept the sacrifices of his people BEFORE Christ had come into the world. Golgotha is the pivot of history. The Israelites looked forward, we backward, both from faith. The former toward what was to come, the others in remembrance of what had happened.

Jesus' Blood shows He had no human father

Before closing the cave, Ron took some from the dried blood that had been kept undisturbed for almost two thousand years and presented it to a laboratory for testing. Using a microscope, it was possible to determine the chromosomal composition of the blood. Ron describes this in his talk in Nashville (YouTube: Ron Wyatt talking about JESUS blood sample). In it he explains that normal human blood contains 46 chromosomes, 23 from each parent. The Y chromosome from the man binds to the X from the woman. All 23 from the mother were present, and the 24th (there were no more chromosomes) was a DIFFERENT Y (i.e. male), in fact an impossible chromosome count, proving that HE HAD NO HUMAN FATHER. This is miracle number ten. The Lord had preserved the

blood until man had the technological means to do a chromosome count of the blood, thereby proving that the Virgin birth is no myth but VERY FACT.

These are the ten miracles connected with the discovery of the Ark of the Covenant. Ron said that there may be others that he missed. But these suffice to provide us with amazing additional evidence of our Lord's sacrifice for the redemption of sins. May this kick our evangelical zeal into high gear. I pray that this little document will be of use in stirring it up. Please do not hesitate to spread this message around. There is no copyright on it. We ask only COMPLETE copies to avoid misunderstandings and ambiguities.

I should like to share another item of news in connection with the circumstances mentioned above. I have a valued friend and brother in Christ who is a retired physician. Recently, in an excited telephone conversation with me, he said that Ron Wyatt's testimony about the chromosome count had raised the question in his mind whether it would be possible for anyone to have blood so depleted in chromosomal content. Being a man of faith and with also a sense of reality, he submitted this to the Lord, asking for a clear sign that all was well.

Not many days passed before he picked up the New Scientist for 7th October 1995, and there on page 16 he found the following heading: "The boy whose blood has No Father". He could hardly believe his eyes! The author, Philip Cohen, quoting an article by David Bonthron and his colleagues at the University of Edinburgh in Nature Genetic (Vol. 11, p. 164) explained that a certain three year-old boy had been found, of whom a part of his white blood cells contain two X Chromosomes, the signal for a female, and had only 23 chromosomes. To cut a long story short, they went on to explain that the probable cause was a self-activating unfertilised ovum which had subsequently (after a very short time) become fertilised in the normal way. The sperm would then have entered only a PART of the already divided ovum, thereby creating this most unusual affect of two types of cells. Bonthron believed that the remarkable genetics of this boy were created by the combination of some very unusual circumstances, which occurred in a very short time window. *"I don't expect we'll ever see another one"*, he said.

Here was yet another miracle! My friend had been given information about an incredibly rare condition, yes, but the TIMING of the article in New Scientist was a true gift from God. The little boy's chromosomes do not match those of our Lord, but implied what Cohen called *"partial parthenogenesis"* (virginal/asexual reproduction). This means that a

100) A ground fissure, also called an earth fissure, is a long, narrow crack or linear opening in the Earth's crust. It is commonly caused by stress exceeding the rock strength, causing the rock to lose its cohesion along its weakest plane. Ground fissures are known to form naturally, such as from earthquakes. A weak plane is exactly what it says: it's a plane along which a rock is weak. This is caused by a number of reasons ranging from faults (the rock has failed in that plane already), mineral cleavage (most minerals break preferentially in one direction, because of their crystal structure) to a layer of weaker material in a layered rock (usually in sediments). None of these apply to the fissure through which Christ's blood gushed forth, which means that the geometrics of the opening itself points to a supernatural event. Perhaps the opening was wider just after its formation, and for a very short time, to allow the blood to fall down freely towards its narrowing destination 20 feet below.

human being can function normally despite a significant reduction in the chromosome count, as was the case with Jesus' blood. (See Postscript for more details.).

Inside the Memorial Church of Moses on Mount Nebo

Some points of interest

And finally, what about those other cases of the finding of the Ark of the Covenant? I have left this until last so as not to spoil the TRUE story by preluding it with the spurious.

I find it interesting, almost intriguing to realise that Steven Spielberg's film "Raiders of the Lost Ark" should have come out for general release in 1981, so just a year earlier. I remember watching it at the time and wondered what he was trying to say, being of Jewish origin. The supernatural affects he attributed to the holiness of the Ark certainly had their parallel in the finding of the real Ark.

Late in that very year, an announcement was made by another team, telling that they had located the Ark in a cave on Mount Nebo, the mountain where Moses overlooked the Promised Land before his death. This team was headed by Tom Crotser from Kansas USA, and included Jim Bollinger and famed astronaut Jim Irwin. Irwin had previously been interviewed on BBC Television by Richard Baker, who asked: *"What are you doing now?"* And amongst other things he said: *"I'm helping to find the Ark of the Covenant in Jordan."* A quote from the "Straits Times of Singapor" appeared in the 1981 Christmas issue of "Far Eastern Berean" with the headline: *"Claim to have found the lost Ark!"* And so it happened that Tom Crotser was interviewed by BBC-1 in January 1982 (at the very time that Ron Wyatt was breaking through into Jeremiah's Grotto). He then showed a photo of the Ark in a subterranean complex discovered in excavation work shortly before World War II and still under the care of the Franciscan Monastery of the Pisgah of Nebo (pisgah means 'peak').[101)] By rare exception Crotser was granted permission to search for the Ark. Furthermore, there was a note to this effect in the Jerusalem Post. The August

101) In the 4th century, a small monastery was built by Egyptian monks on the peak (pisgah) of Nebo in memory of Moses, who died there. The Franciscans bought the site in 1932 and undertook excavations, as well as reconstructing much of the basilica. During the exploration they discovered the cave and its precious contents. The new basilica is called the Memorial Church of Moses. Pope Benedict visited the site in March 2000 together with King Abdullah and spouse. The basilica, that houses the archaeological remains, was extensively renovated and was re-opened in 2016.

1986 issue of the Hope of Israel Ministries contained a detailed report of the sighting.[102] Now we may very well ask why Crotser was able to take a sharp picture, whereas Wyatt was not. I shall leave it to my readers to ponder that question. Little further attention has been paid to this find, and further sightings have been blocked, a policy Crotser was comfortable with. When asked, he reportedly said: *"God sent me only to locate the Ark; I was not to open it; neither was I to bring it out."*

An American archaeologist by name of David Lutz stated:

> «« One rabbi told me this discovery would not only promote the building of the Temple on Mount Moriah in Jerusalem, but would also signal the end of the Diaspora, the dispersion of the Jewish people. It would be as influential as a spoken command from the Almighty to all Jewish persons to come home to the Promised Land. To Christians it would be a clear signal that we are nearing the end of this age and standing at the beginning of the Messianic Kingdom. »»

One wonders why the timing of the event on God's calendar is just now. Are we entering the 'crossroads of history'? And if so, then we shall need to know which route to take. I am in no position to predict whether the Israeli government will in our present time (in 1996) make a move, but the facts are already out and being promoted quite widely. This in itself is creating quite a stir. In any case, it is prompting us to prepare for the Lord's glorious Return by living a God-fearing life.

Based on the Biblical prophecies, many have made projections. We are told to be patient, because there is still much to be done before the conditions of the Second Coming are met. By this kind of thinking we nullify the urgency of our Lord's words: *"Watch and pray for you know not the day or the hour - and again I say, watch."* (Mt. 24:42) The interpretation of prophecy, particularly in our present Christian dispensation, has never been an easy task. By shelving His Second Coming, it is quite possible that we are depriving ourselves of the very thing we need to trim our lamps and be prepared. Whatever, we cannot be for sure. I would say that we live in days of passionate expectation, and it behooves to *"love the prospect of His appearing",* and to *"purify ourselves, even as He is pure"*.

So what is the artifact on Nebo? I do not accuse Crotser lying. No way. He certainly found something. But what is it? My guess is that it is a REPLICA of the true Ark that in

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102) On their website combined with another was the following report of Tom Crotser's visit: "A permit was granted by the Franciscan office in Amman to search for the cave. The entrance to the cave was nearby. The night had fallen when we entered a tunnel 35 feet in length, 4 feet wide and man-made high. A primitive wall impeded our passage, but through a hole we were able to enter one by one. At the end of another 300 feet of tunnel we ran into a second wall. After knocking stones down we entered, one by one, into a small cave about 10 by 12 feet and by the light of our flashlights we could see an artefact covered with skins. The carrying staves were found wrapped in a bundle beside. The Presence of the Lord was so strong that for a while I hesitated to remove the covering. After having done so, I could see a box that no one of us deared to touch. The box was 62.5 inches long, 37.5 inches high and deep. After having made photographs we withdrew from that awesome place. Curiously, we found the Ark but not the golden cherubim (angels) that used to be on top of it. The Mercy Seat was missing! It could be in a cave nearby as there were many caves along that corridor."

Jeremiah's days was hidden in some cave. Why should the Prophet do this? He was a man of great integrity towards the Lord, yet lived amongst people who were dishonest to the core, even his OWN. They would be watching his every move, wanting to know what he was up to. Then possibly SOMEONE could find the Ark and raid it. As a ruse, he made a replica, pretending it to be the real thing, which, in accordance with the narrative of Maccabees, was hidden on Nebo.

There is yet another worthwhile story to conclude this paper. In 1992, the famous archaeologist Graham Hancock published "The Sign and the Seal: the Quest for the Lost Ark of the Covenant". It is the account of his travels from the early 1980s in search of the Ark, which according to a very ancient tradition is guarded with the utmost devotion and reverence in Aksum Ethiopia by a people who are a strange mixture of Judaism and Christianity. Hancock could not get access to the building where this Ark is kept. Its sole custodian is a virgin monk who cannot leave the sacred grounds until his death. And it can hardly be called a coincidence that in the early 1980s also here a new light began to shine.

The story goes, according to the Encyclopedia Britannica, that King Solomon sired a son by the Queen of Sheba, the ruler of what is now known as Ethiopia and Yemen. Less than twenty years later, their son Menelech traveled to Jerusalem, where he was treated very well by his father, who asked him what gift he would like. *"The Ark of the Covenant",* he replied, which of course was rejected. Menelech was not pleased with this refusal, and the story continues, he and some companions managed to steal the Ark in the dead of night and brought it to Ethiopia, where it has rested until this very day. A delightful but highly improbable story. It would have caused a major embarrassment to the people of Israel had they discovered that their main cult object had been stolen. This would have sparked a 'holy war' in order to set things right. But no, there is no mention of this in the Jewish annals. Then, what is it that in Aksum is so carefully guarded? I believe it could be yet another replica, similar to the one on the Pisgah of Mount , perhaps not made in Solomon's day, but going back to the era of the Prophet Jeremiah or thereabouts.

• See: WYATT ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH - https://wyattmuseum.com

POSTSCRIPT TO APP. 13

In Parthenogenesis, the Y Chromosome would be Missing

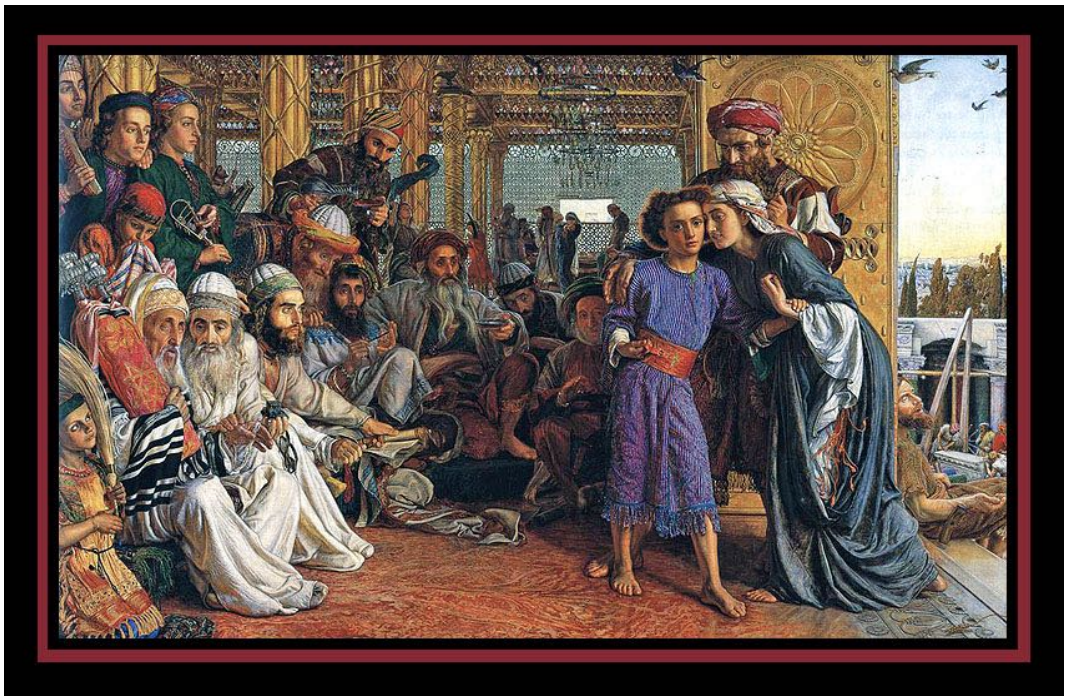
In the XY gender-determination system, females have two of the same kind of chromosomes (XX), called homogametic. Males have two distinct chromosomes (XY), called heterogametic, of which the Y is received from the sperm. Not being fertilised by a man, Christ's blood should lack the Y chromosome, but then He could not have been a male! From parthenogenesis (asexual reproduction) one expects 23 pairs of chromosomes in stead of 46, and the result can only be female, as demonstrated by experiments in rabbits. The evidence for Christ's virginal conception is obtained from the count of 23 chromosomes +1. The extra 1 is a miraculously added Y.

Interestingly, there is a unique case of partial parthenogenesis described in the New Scientist (1998 issue Oct. 1995), entitled: "The boy whose blood has No Father", which they thought was probably due to the spontaneous mytosis (cell division) of an unfertilised ovocyte (female egg). More probably it was caused by a failed penetration of the plasma membrane by a spermatozoon, where one part of the already once divided ovocyte was fertilized by another sperm in the usual way, resulting in two types of genetics. **It is the penetration of the cell membrane (a kind of eggshell) that initiates mytosis**, but the article fails to consider this, although known.

A chromosome count of the blood of Christ can be more closely verified, for there are blood samples of Christ from for instance the Eucharistic Miracle in Lanciano, Italy, which dates from the 8th century. To investigate the chromosomes in Christ's blood it has to come to life again, for in dead blood such a thing is impossible. Various ecclesiastical investigations or 'recognitions' have been conducted on this sample since 1574. In 1970-1971, and taken up again partly in 1981, there was an investigation by Odoardo Linoli, professor in anatomy and pathological histology, and in chemistry and clinical microscopy. Perhaps some blood that was left over from the investigation, closed in 1981, could be used for a count, after first having been warmed up to body temperature, accompanied by prayerd.

Regarding Christ's blood, an interesting study has been conducted on the blood tears of 'crying icons'. For decades, the curious phenomenon has been occurring that in many places around the world, statues of Mary, as well as prints of Jesus, spontaneously begin to cry blood tears. An image of the Madonna with the infant Jesus began crying blood tears on May 3, 2003, which happened in the bedroom of Father Pietro Maria Chiriatte in Alberobello, southern Italy. On May 27, 2004, another image in the proximity, representing the face of the Shroud of Turin, also began to cry blood tears. In both cases, this blood was sent to the genetic laboratory of the University of Bologna, which has a great reputation for DNA research. The results for both blood samples were identical: they were human blood of type AB, but strikingly, the genetic characteristics of the Y chromosome had never been observed before and did not match the data from 22,000 samples from 187 different populations, which were in the university's database. The report concluded that this blood is so rare that it is almost unique, as there is statistically one chance in two billion that this typology occurs. In the accessible information there is no mention of a chromosome count.

The Jewish vernacular in Jesus' time



The Finding of the Saviour in the Temple by William Holman Hunt (Sudley House)

2.12 – Hebrew was called Hebrew!

The Dead Sea scrolls, discovered in eleven caves in the decade between 1946 and 1956, have provided invaluable insight into the language used in Judeah during the Second Temple period. I now quote from the book "The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation" van Michael Wise, Martin Abegg Jr en Edward Cook (HarperCollins # 1996, pp. 9-10):

> «« Apart from copies of Biblical books, about one out of six of the Dead Sea Scrolls is inscribed in Aramaic. Yet the vast majority of the scrolls were Hebrew texts. Hebrew was manifestly the principal literary language for the Jews of this period. A few texts pointed to the use of Hebrew for speech as well as writing. Rabbinic Hebrew (a kind of dialect) was shown to be no invention, but simply a development from the ordinary spoken Hebrew of Biblical times. The scrolls have therefore proven that late Second-Temple Jews used various dialects of Hebrew along with Aramaic (as a subsidiary language). A small minority of the scrolls were written in Greek and their discovery has vouchsafed us a further glimpse into the linguistic (and religious) complexity of first-century Jewish society. »» Omissions in the text are not indicated.

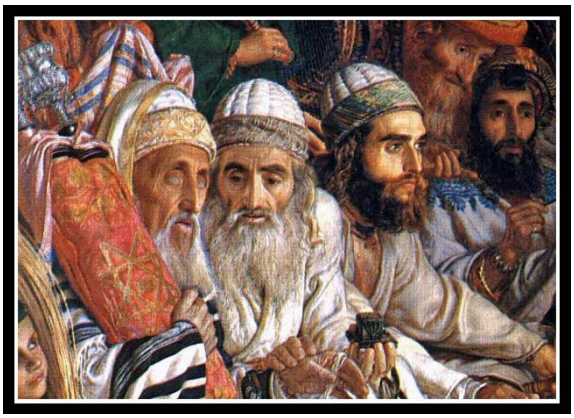
In Jesus' time Hebrew - and not Aramaic - was the vernacular among the local citizens in Judeah, as has now become the dominant view amongst Israeli scholars, which doesn't mean that no Greek was spoken in this region and that Jesus when speaking there to a larger public did not speak Greek. It is quite obvious that most visitors of Judeah, also those from Galilee, and its pelgrims, did not speak fluent Hebrew and quite a number did not speak Hebrew at all. Jerusalem was a much visited town with great international standing, in quiet times but

especially during the great festivities. According to Wolfgang Reinhardt and others, a population figure for Jerusalem under the Roman occupation of 60 to 120 thousand seems plausible, which is true for even the higher end of this scale in the twenties of our Christian era. The enormous group of Passover pilgrims needs to be added to that. Forty years after the Crucifixion the number of pilgrims counted according to Flavius Josephus at least three million, which seems to be reliable because it is confirmed by several angles of attack and Josephus knew these numbers from firsthand experience, for he was then, in the time of glory of Jerusalem, in the year 66 AD, about thirty years old (see Ant. 17:213-14 and Bell. Jud. 2:280, 6:423-29) This puts the outpouring of the Holy Ghost in perspective, which happened fifty days after Jesus' Crucifixion:

> ‹‹‹ And there were dwelling at Jerusalem (during Pentecost) Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad (like a rushing mighty wind), the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another: *"Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judeah, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians. We do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God."* ››› (Acts 2:5-11)

Almost all Christian scholars maintain the established view that Hebrew had become an extinct language in Jesus' time and had a function very much comparable to Latin nowadays. The word 'Hebrew' in the New Testament is consistently interpreted by them as meaning Aramaic, as if it was an ethnical form (Flemisch for instance is an ethnic indication and not linguistic, because Flemish equals Dutch). If in a tourist report in English it says that there were people who spoke Dutch, they will not translate that they spoke German although the two languages are similar. It's so ridiculous to translate Hebrew with Aramaic. Aramaic had its own denomination and was then called Syrian (or Suristi) or alternatively Chaldean (Chaldaisti). Hebrew was then called Hebrew! I concede that Aramaic, that actually stands for a number of languages, was probably a means of communication amongst the non-Jewish population of the Promised Land and was prevalent in the Jewish Diaspora (dispersal among the peoples), and that is an established fact. The importance of Aramaic as medium of communication in the Middle-East crescent can hardly be overestimated; without it the proliferation of the Christian faith in this part of the world would have been unthinkable. The first translation of the Gospels is therefore in Aramaic. It is safe to say that Aramaic was one of the important current languages in that part of the world in rivalry with Greek. We should not be surprised that the koinè-Greek, the dialect of the common man, and of course the spoken Hebrew of that time, had loan words from Aramaic. An example of this is the word gehenna that appears twelve times in the New Testament, which of course is written in Greek. Gehenna is Aramaic and is usually translated with Hell. The people in Jesus' time knew this was the valley of (the son of) Hinnom, where criminals received a dishonorable funeral, and understood that it was a figurative way to indicate Hell, a place with the weeping and gnashing of teeth. It is generally known that if loan words occur in a language, the grammatical structure and sentence structure of that language is kept unchanged. The fact that a few scattered Aramaic loan words show up in Biblical Greek, is therefore no proof to the contrary that in Jesus' time, in Jerusalem and its vicinity, the people spoke Hebrew.

Nonetheless the writing on the Cross in several languages, indicating the reason for Christ's condemnation, shows that if Aramaic was used in Judeah and the other parts of the Promised Land, it did not really count, because that language is absent in the writing. Take note that Pilate, who drafted the texts, was a Latin speaker and came from Tarragona in Spain where Aramaic was not spoken, and so he followed the local custom. Luke 23:38 tells that the inscription *"This is the King of the Jews"* was written in Greek, Latin and Hebrew. It says Hebrew, not Aramaic as some like to translate. This indicates that instead of Aramaic, Greek was the more current language there, presumably also being spoken amongst themselves by the ordinary Jews in the places around Judeah, who lived further away from the dynamic religious life in Jerusalem and were therefore less exposed to spoken Hebrew; for the religious practice it was different. Most of the time Jesus preached in Galilee, where of course He always talked Greek if not in a Synagogue.



That Jesus at the east of Galilee beyond the lake, called the land of Gerasa, in the priestly service of healing, spoke Hebrew – see Mark 7:34: *"effatha"* (Be opened!) – is no proof that He also spoke Hebrew there, while preaching in the fields. Ephphatha is a Hebrew conjugation of a verb that according to the rules of the game is transcribed in Greek letters from the Hebrew 'hiffatah', which is in the singular imperative mood (the niphal designation). To illustrate: The sound 'hi' is transcribed with an 'e', like in Gehenna. The Hebrew Ge-hinna(-om) is in Greek: Ge-enna ('hi' becomes 'e'). Also in the pre-Christian Greek Septuagint translation of the Bible, a king like Hizkia becomes Hezekhiah. (source: Ben van Noort, internetblog)

The Jewish population was a minority in the land of Gerasa and suffered, according to the blessed Anna-Katharina Emmerich, a rejected and discriminated existence ever since - 1.250 years earlier - the Israelites of that place had refused Gideon's plea to fight the Midianites. According to Anna-Katharina in Jesus' time the people of that region practiced all kind of occultism that also involved mind-expanding plants. The Apostle Philip came from nearby, from Betsaida situated at the frontier. So, Gerasa lies in a pagan territory, that of the disappearance, of separated ones, the rejected ones. It appears that the Hebrew 'garaz' refers to disappearing or being cut off. And so it is completely acceptable to assume that there the regional people spoke their own and totally different dialect.

That Hebrew was the current language in and around Jerusalem is clear also from an account by Flavius Josephus. He tells us that during the first Jewish war several sons of King Izaates were captured by the Romans. Flavius Josephus explains that they remained in Jerusalem to learn *"our language and culture"*. King Izaates of Adiabene sent his sons to learn Hebrew, that is *"our language",* because there, far away in Adiabene, the vernacular was Aramaic. (Ant. 20:3:4, Bell. 6:6:4)

What seems to contradict the theory of Hebrew being used as the vernacular by the Jewish population in the Promised Land, especially for people living in and around Jerusalem, are Jesus' words on the Cross from Mark 15:34: "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthanei!" (My God, My

God, why have You forsaken Me?). Without the suffix (me) the Hebrew has 'sabach–ßtha' and the Aramaic 'sebachtha'. Sabachthani represents a less perfect grammatical form, yet it is still Hebrew. Lama / lema is Hebrew, as well as Aramaic, but Eloi is pure Aramaic. In pure Hebrew it should have stated: 'Eli', and this is how it is given in the most frequently used original texts of Matthew, but in the verified original text of Westcott & Hort (which I see as the right one), the word Eloi is given in both Gospels. Perhaps Eloi was rabbinic Hebrew that we also encounter in the Mishna, which is the written Hebrew that, unsurprisingly, has a number of hybrids and loanwords from Aramaic, that is, corrupted Hebrew. Despite this explanation, it remains very curious to me that the report says 'Eloi'. In "Mary, Door to Heaven" from Consuelo, who was instructed by the Virgin Mary, we find an interesting section that supports our view (Ch. 28:28): *"With deep bitterness Jesus said: 'Eli, Eli, lema, sabachthanei!'* [cf. Ps. 22:1: אֵלִי אֵלִי לָמָה עֲזַבְתָּנִי] *Those present [among whom the multitude of foreign pilgrims] thought He was calling Elias, because many of them did not know Hebrew."*[103] So Jesus spoke Hebrew, in the exact way of Psalm 22! The conclusion seems justified that Jesus in his high priestly capacity spoke the language customary during the ritual acts, and spoke Biblical Hebrew to complete the rite. From an unexpected source, this quote also confirms that the official language in the Promised Land was Hebrew, but not in other places (for it says 'many of them'). Consequently, there is little reason to doubt that the writers of the synoptic Gospels, all of whom came from the Promised Land, did know Hebrew as their mother tongue, at least the language in which they said their prayers and in which they carried on their theological debates.

2.13 – The Thesis of the Oral Tradition invalidated

For long, based on some remark by Papias (ca. 60-163), who came to be the bishop of Hierapolis (Turkey), scholars assumed that there was an Aramaic/Hebrew origin of the Gospel of Matthew that at some time would have been translated into Greek. Papias said: *"Matthew composed the sayings (or, oracles) in the Hebrew tongue, and each one interpreted (c.q. translated) them as best he could."* The respected Church historian Eusebius (ca. 263-339) comments: *"Matthew had first preached to the Hebrews, and when he was about to go to others also, he transmitted his Gospel in writing in his native language."* According to Eusebisus it was Matthew who wrote down his own preaching in Hebrew which, it is presumed today in scientific circles, happened decades after Jesus' public appearance. This has become the accepted theory not only for the Evangelist Matthew, but also for the other three Evangelists. This is the so-called oral tradition which is 'not' the writing down of the own Words of the Master Himself, who preached in Greek, but the written record would be

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103) From "Maria, Puerta del Cielo" (Marie, Door to Heaven) by Consuelo - Espinosa Ediciones, Barcelona # 1990 (28:28). Revelations by the Virgin Mary on the occasion of the Marian year 1987-'88. On the backcover of the French edition of Parvis (1992) is written: «« By means of internal conversations entrusted to Consuelo, a Spanisch housemother, the Virgin Mary presents here her thoughts and wishes. This gift from our Heavenly Mother, to us her children on earth, is actually a Biblical catechesis. The guiding thread in this book is the life of the Virgin in the mystery of Christ's life. Mary wants our conversion, which is why, alongside the stories, there are always love-born maternal exhortations, urging us to be serious about our relationship to Christ and thus strengthen our position of children of God on the way to maturity. This book opens "a door to hope" and reveals the exalted task that the Virgin Mary has been assigned to. In her hands were laid "the keys of Heaven" as intended in God's plan. Because, "if the Lord has taken the path of Mary to come into the world, the return of men to Jesus will also take place through Mary" who is "the Mother of Divine Grace" and "the Tabernacle of God and the Door to Heaven". »»

the Words of the Master, who preached in Aramaic, being preached at a later stage by his disciples in Greek and then, very much later, entrusted to perkament. With this way of transmission distortions are unavoidable. This is a very serious matter for those who take to heart the Word of God. Origen (ca. 184-253), who as one of the few Christians then, knew Hebrew very well and was aware of the history of the Jews, said something similar, but did not presume an oral tradition, or the preaching first by Jesus' disciples. He said: *"The first (Gospel), composed in the Hebrew language, was written by Matthew (...) for those who came to faith from Judaism."* 104)

How God feels abandoned by God (cf. J.N.S.R.)

Some believe to see in the cry of Christ Jesus on the Cross: *"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me!"* a contradiction with his Trinitarian divinity. This exclamation points back to Psalm 22, a psalm that was often sung while the Jews were being chased into the gas chambers. The theological explanation of this apparent contradiction is that Christ Jesus occasionally wanted to experience human impotence without the assistance of his divinity. He allowed the influence of his omnipotence, which always assists Him, to recede - not the omnipotence itself, but the influence thereof. In this way He could experience the weakness and vulnerability of his human nature. This abolition is possible because God's infinite power can temporarily be withdrawn if so desired, whereby even the knowledge of its existence is abolished, so that man, who is Christ, could be delivered to extreme weakness and moral death. Of course, a 'suspension' of divinity is different from the 'loss' of it. Similarly, it can be stated that Jesus remained united with the Father while with his lips He requested the removal of the pains endured. Man is what he 'wants' to be: it is indeed in his will that he shows his true nature, not in what man says under the pressure of suffering; his reasonable « I » is what man deliberately pursues that represents him, and he is not what his nature pursues under the pressure of suffering.

Even if this explanation appears unsatisfactory, one should remember that a clearly positive statement in the Bible, in this case Christ's being God, cannot in any way be affected by a contradiction elsewhere. The solution must always be found in a lack of insight, because the perceived contradiction is never insurmountable.

Within a few decades after the depopulation of the Holy Land by the Romans in retaliation to the Bar Kochba Revolt (132-136), the country was repopulated by the Jewish Diaspora, who mainly spoke Aramaic. After the suppression of the first revolt during 66 to 73 after Christ, the country had already lost much of its lustre and after the second war people could absolutely not image how refined and prosperous the ancient Jewish culture had been in Jesus' time. Apparently Papias had joined the general public opinion. Unfortunately many after him followed his views, even until today, because he is considered an important witness, *"describing himself as living when it was not exceptional to meet persons who had been hearers of the Apostles and (if we understand him rightly) he had met two who professed to have actually seen our Lord Himself."* (Dict. of Early Chr. Biogr.)

Ben Van Noort clarifies in "Jesus's Stenographers" (rev. ed. 2018) why scholars arrived at the erroneous view that Aramaic was widely spoken in Jesus' time in the Promised Land, a

104) Papias and Origen are quoted by Eusebius in Hist. eccl. 3:39:16 and 6:25:4. The personal comment of Eusebius is in Hist. eccl. 3:24:6. The Papias quote is from his "Expositions of the Sayings of the Lord", now lost. The Origen quote is from one of the lost commentaries on the Gospel of Matthew of which only 8 remain of a total of 25.

view that had become so widespread, partly because of the work of Gustaf Dalman, that until recently no one ventured to even doubt that Jesus spoke Aramaic. It was assumed that in the Second Temple period Hebrew was nearly extinct, comparable to Latin that in the beginning of the twentieth century was only used in the seminaries and in certain ecclesiastical circles. I now quote Van Noort:

> «« The assumption that Aramaic was the language that Jesus once spoke did not come about in the last century. As early as a few centuries after the start of Christendom, this idea was mooted. After the Jewish insurrections of 70 and 135 AD the Romans decided to wipe the Jewish denomination off the map by making it a province of Syria, where people spoke Aramaic. So it happened that this became the official language in Israel. Moreover, quite a number of Jewish immigrants from Babel, where Aramaic was spoken, settled in Judeah around this time. Many Jews in Babel considered it as their sacred duty to fill the deserted Jewish land once again with descendents of Abraham. When, in the second century and later ages, the Christian pilgrims from the Roman Empire happened to visit the land of Jesus, they heard the people there speak Aramaic. And thus it was surmised that this was also the language Jesus spoke. And this falls in place with several Church Fathers, such as Jerome, who entertained the erroneous view that Jesus preached in Aramaic. As a matter of fact, the thriving Jewish state in Jesus' time looked quite different from what the Romans made of it later on. »» (Ch. 2.1, p. 23)

There remained, however, small pockets, however, also in later centuries, in the land of Palestine, as the Romans had renamed the Promised Land (Haaretz), where Hebrew continued to be spoken, as recent archaeological finds in Hebron and its vicinity seem to have proven. It is a well known fact, as Cecil Roth reminds, that Judah the Nasi (170-217AD), the one who directed the writing down of the Mishna as basis for the later Talmud, made a point of seeing to it that Hebrew was spoken in his household, considering it to be, together with Greek, the only tongue fitted for a civilised intercourse.

Based on logical grounds the cursed 'oral tradition thesis' can be debunked. The earliest piece of a Gospel that has been discovered until now is the Greek Magdalene fragment, in this case of Matthew's Gospel.[105)] This goes back to a few decades after Christ's crucifixion, no later than the year 50. Therefore the Greek rendering that has come to us, must have happened at a very early stage, which again is a fact that contradicts the oral tradition.

The conclusion is legitimate that the Gospels written in Greek literally contain the words of Jesus. Literally, because they were recorded by speedwriters (stenographers), as explained in Appendix 3. Later these notes were elaborated and combined with other meticulous accounts, as usual at the time. Perhaps the first fifteen chapters of Acts, written in Greek, have been translated from Hebrew. This assumption would fit the situation where in these chapters Jerusalem is at centre stage. For the rest I endorse the approach of Van Noort, who writes that outside Judeah the vernacular amongst the Jews was Greek and that this language forms the basis of the accounts used for all the Gospels.

2.14 – The New Testament Greek approached from Hebrew thinking

It is hardly surprising that the language spoken by the Jews was rooted in the range of meanings of the Hebrew language, even if not based on Hebrew source material. The language of the Gospels (and of the first fifteen chapters of Acts) is, like the Greek of the

105) "Eyewitness to Jesus - Amazing New Manuscript Evidence About the Origin of the Gospels", by Carsten Peter Thiede and Matthew d'Ancona, Doubleday # 1996.

Septuagint, in ‘low’ Greek and sometimes resembles a translation from Hebrew. But this does not prove it is a translation, because it can be the Greek of the high-speed writers, and of Jesus, whose mother tongue was Hebrew, the language conceptually known to them, which played a part even when conversing in Greek.

The Gospels and other parts of the New Testament are written in low Greek, in the everyday speech of ordinary men and women, tradesmen, craftsmen, clerks, and the like, a language also found in the common papyri of that period. It appears that there are no words in the New Testament not found elsewhere, though a number of words, the so-called ‘hapax legomena’, may not be found in the Greek dictionaries that are in use for the translation of the Classics. The New Testament is written in what we could call the cosmopolitan Greek at the beginning of our Christian era. This is the ‘koinè’ or ‘common’ Greek of the great Hellenistic-Roman world. With the New Testament Greek we discover a language larded with Hebraisms, not loan-words but loan-expressions, which, as regards their form, are pure Greek. The superficial reader does not need to recognize them as Hebraisms because the expressions are Greek, but these may have a supplementary range of meanings belonging to the Hebraic semantic and idiomatic set of the writer, which includes the hidden Hebraic denotations, connotations, implications and ambiguities of a particular word or sentence. This seems to be typical for a community that, like the Jewish, was in a state of transition and was conversant with the lingua franca of the time, which often happens to be much different from the colloquial tongue.

The Hebraisms of Aquila

The proselyte Aquila, a pupil of Rabbi Akiba (ca. 50 – ca. 135 AD), made a translation of the Old Testament by applying principles of the strictest literal interpretation of the text. It strove only to reproduce the text word for word, and for this reason it grew rapidly in favour in strictly Jewish circles where Hebrew was understood and in which they liked to think when reading the Tenach (Old Testament). For a long time it continued to be read by the Greek-speaking Jews; according to the Jewish Encyclopedia.com, even in the time of Justinian the Great, the Eastern Roman emperor from 527 to 565 AD. Although the Hebraisms in the Aquila translation were made on purpose, the same principle, but to a far lesser extent, can be noticed in the New Testament Greek.

The Semitic expression of Jesus in “talitha cum(i)” (little girl, arise!) from Mark 5:41 would prove according to some, among whom the great Aramaic language expert Gustaf Dalman (1855-1941), that Jesus spoke Aramaic. His contemporary Theodor Zahn rejected Dalman’s view and rightly so. In this expression talitha (little girl) is an Aramaic word. However, to determine the language used, one needs to look at the conjugation of the verb, because the rules of conjugation are not exchanged between one language and the other. In this particular case the form cum(i) (arise) has the same conjugation in both Aramaic and Hebrew, and so it is inconclusive to the problem at hand. (Ben Van Noort, Internetblog)

Franz Delitzsch (1813-1890) was a German Lutheran theologian and Hebraist, who is best known today for his translation of the New Testament into Hebrew. It was revised by a young Arnold Bogomul Ehrlich at Delitzsch’s insistence and later by some orthodox rabbis

who had come to faith in Jesus Christ, such as Dr Joachim Heinrich Biesenthal and Rabbi Yechiel Tzvi Lichtenstein. As the staff of "First Fruits of Zion" aptly noticed: [106)]

> «« The rough Greek text of the New Testament preserves ancient Semitic constructions like an ancient fossil embedded in limestone. Reconstructing the Hebrew voice of the New Testament from the Greek text is like bringing the fossil back to life. Delitzsch himself said: *"We have cause to say that our new translation has contributed somewhat to bring the New Testament nearer to the Jews as a prominent work of their literature."* »»

Boaz Michael, the founder and director of First Fruits of Zion comments:

> «« Delitzsch's Hebrew New Testament is more than just a Hebrew translation of the Greek. His work work is different because he started with an awareness that he was dealing with a Jewish document. Delitzsch re-contextualized the Gospels back into their Hebraic foundations. He understood and revealed the Hebrew/Jewish underpinnnings of the Gospels. Delitzsch believed that *"The Shemitic woof of the New Testament Hellenism is Hebrew, not Aramaic. Our Lord and his Apostles thought and spoke for the most part in Hebrew."* (…) (We have to distinguish here between conversing between each other and the preaching for a larger public.)
>
> To capture the genuine Jewishness of the Gospels, a translator must be intimately familiar with Jewish literature and thought. He must be familiar with Jewish idioms, Semitisms, proverbs, symbols, allusions, philosophies, and spiritual concepts inherent in the text. Delitzsch (fitted that qualification, as he) was an expert in post-Biblical Hebrew and Rabbinic texts. He became known as the 'Christian Talmudist'. »»

2.15 – The Origin of the Hebrew language and its Revival

When we speak of language, even a child thinks of the tower of Babel. The Bible recounts that before this tower was built the people spoke one language. A well-known interpretation holds that during the subsequent confusion of tongues and division of nations the ancestor Heber and his nearest relatives were provided 'from heaven' with the Heb(e)rew language, the language that was in all likelihood spoken by Adam, the language also of angels (Sotah 33a), and of course of the Holy Script. In the philosophical masterpiece, the book of Kuzari, Judah Halevi (ca 1075-1141) says the following interesting thing, which has a bearing on our discussion on the origin of the Hebrew language: *"Hebrew in its essence is more noble (than other languages) both traditionally and rationally. Traditionally, it is the language in which revelation was made to Adam and Eve and by means of it they spoke. (…) Its superiority (may be shown) rationally by considering the people who utilized it insofar as they needed it for addressing one another, especially for prophecy, which was widespread among them, and the need for preaching, songs, and praises."* [107)]

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106) First Fruits of Zion (FFOZ), established in Marshfield, USA, is a Messianic Jewish educational ministry dedicated to proclaiming the Torah (the Bible) and its way of life, fully centered on Messiah and to today's people of God. Its publishing arm Vine of David has published in 2010 "Delitzsch Hebrew Gospels: A Hebraic English Translation". The book offers Franz Delitzsch's classic translation of the Gospels into Hebrew, and offers a literal Hebraic translation into English, which preserves Hebrew names, idioms, Semitisms, and constructions. Source: "Messiah Journal" nr 108 # 2011 (p. 40), and for the quote of Boaz Michael: nr 104 # 2010 (p. 7).

That it so happened that Heber was miraculously provided with the Hebrew language, is indicated by his name, which means *"(language) from across"*. The gift of the Hebrew language happened when his son Peleg was born, for Genesis 10:25 says: *"To Heber were born two sons: the name of one was Peleg (which means divide), for in his days the earth was divided (in the Babylonian confusion of languages)"*. And a little further: *"Heber lived 34 years and begot Peleg"*, which in the chronology of Panin was in the year 1757 after Adam, which equals 2248 BC, 780 years before the start of the Exodus. The Bible does not pretend that all the Israelites descend from Heber. Based on the Table of Nations of Genesis 10, he can be considered the father of several peoples, which explains why the Hebrew, that remained closer to its original form, leads the larger Semitical group of languages. And so the Hebrew stands on top of the Semitical language pyramid, and it is not the reverse.

It is interesting to note that upon Heber's death, Jacob was 19 years old and that Abraham had passed away 4 years earlier, in spite of the fact that Abraham was born 6 generations and 285 years after Heber. Heber reached an extreme old age, although in Biblical terms and for his generation this was not exceptional. I see not why to doubt these Biblical facts, for Heber was an Adamit of the fifteenth generation and therefore close to the first human being, in the exalted and original meaning of the notion of human.

We should expect that between the time of the confusion of languages, when the Hebrew language was given to an ancestor of Abraham, and the time of the Exodus 780 years later, the language changed. During their 240 years' stay in Egypt it is to be expected that the Israelites, who had no literature to make them remember their former language, borrowed heavily from the Egyptian vernacular and from the local tongue in the Egyptian province of Goshen (where they sojourned), a tongue of which we know nothing. It can be inferred that it was Moses' task to purify the language of the Israelites. The Torah is the earliest known instance of the use of Hebrew in writing, known as the language of men and angels (1 Cor. 13:1), the language of Adam. The Torah now was an important tool to teach the people their old language again.

That during their stay in Egypt the linguistic evolution of Heber's tongue should have been very pronounced is substantiated by archaeological finds in the Sinai, where a large number of rock inscriptions have been found that were made during the Exodus wanderings of the people of Israel. Barthold Niebuhr reports in "Voyage en Arabie" (Travels in Arabia), published in the second half of the 18th century, *"that the inscriptions were the work of the Israelites exercising themselves during their stay in the wilderness in their newly acquired*

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107) Judah Halevi is one of the great figures of Jewish history and fittingly he was selected for a book called "Fifty Key Jewish Thinkers" (by Rabbi prof. Dan Cohn-Sherbok). I now quote from "A Short History of The Jewish People", a major standard work written by Cecil Roth: «« The humanistic tradition of Spanish Jewry reached its climax with Judah Halevi. Born in Central Spain, he had the breadth of outlook which is derived from a first-hand acquaintance with three cultures - the Christian, the Arabic, and the Jewish. By profession a physician, he was by vocation a poet. Never perhaps has any other person acquired such extraordinary mastery over a language no longer ordinarily spoken. His inspiration soars above the self-imposed shackles of Arabic prosody - the artificial metrical structure, the acrostics of the first letter at the beginning of each line, and the monotonous jingling rhyme at the end. Nothing Jewish, and nothing human, was strange to his muse - neither the pleasures of friendship, nor the ecstasies of passion, nor the grandeurs of nature, nor the mysteries of religion. Above all, he developed a transcendental passion for the Holy Land: and his hymns to Zion compare in their heart-rending appeal to the greatest love-lyrics in world literature. »»

art of writing, and thus followed up with the ardour of a new student as in a quiet school." In the middle of the 19th century several important expeditions were made to seriously study the Sinaic inscriptions. There was the expedition of Professor Lottin de Laval in 1851, who was commissioned by the French government. The first Exodus inscriptions he found were near a place the Arabs used to call "The Wells of Moses". He took home three hundred squeezes of the most important finds, recorded in his book: "Voyage dans la Peninsule arabique du Sinai et l'Egypt émoyenne" (Travels in the Arabic Peninsula of the Sinai and the outer Egyptian region). In his concluding remarks De Laval writes: *"It is virtually impossible that a people so intelligent, so persevering as that of the Hebrew nation, would not have left in the indelible granite of the Peninsula of Sinai a single monument of their Exodus, as a way to thank God for being able, in the midst of so much misery and danger, to have reached a safe heaven and liberty."*

The ancient Sinaic inscriptions that speak of the historicity of the Exodus, some of which the father of Palestinian archaeology, Sir Flinders Petrie, carried to England, are of two distinct kinds, writes the famous linguist Charles Forster. One is enchorial or common writing while the other is in the hieroglyphic style of Egypt as used by the priests and royalty. Several inscriptions contain lines that alternate from the enchorial writing to the hieroglyphic style (for the trained eye it is easy to distinguish the original inscriptions from the graffiti that were made by the Armenian Christian pilgrims). Most are written in a 23-letter combination of an Egyptian-Hebrew alphabet that includes 12 Hebrew signs of the Paleo-Hebrew. The other signs are similar to those found in the alphabets of the Phoenicians, Greek, Ethiopians and Himyarites (old-Arabic and therefore Semitic). The language pattern is manifestly Egyptian, a Chamitic language, and therefore not Semitic, but distantly related to it. The Coptic (European form of the Arab 'kibt', derived from E'gypt') was the language of the first Christians of North-East Africa. The Sahidic form of Coptic, found in the oldest translations of the New Testament, remained remarkably stable and is almost identical to old-Egyptian (after the 10th century the Coptic receded in favour of the Arab language, but it is still used liturgically). Reverend Forster found that five out of every six words used in the Sinaic inscription are cognate with Himyarite (Yemen). The inscriptions cannot be deciphered from the Hebrew lexicon! 108)

2.16 – The Coptic-Hebrew controversy

If we accept the purification of the Hebrew language under Moses, we may nonetheless expect a few traces of Old Egyptian in the Torah, but no more than a few if indeed this purification was carried out effectively. In this way the authenticity of the Torah is brought forward, for it emphasises that it was written in that period of time. Of course, Moses, the adopted son of the Pharaoh, was educated in the language of the court, in High Egyptian, a language that must have differed from the vernacular in Goshen. To put matters straight, we should be careful not to draw conclusions as to the character of the Biblical Hebrew from the fact that the Sinaic inscriptions, translated by Forster, exhibit a Himyaritic lexicon together with an Egyptian language structure.

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108) "Sinai Photographed" by Reverend Charles Forster - Richard Bentley, London # 1862. See also other books by him, such as: "The one primeval language traced experimentally through ancient inscriptions, including 'The voice of Israel from the rocks of Sinai' " - Richard Bentley, London # 1851.

The discovery was further elaborated by the French Egyptologist and linguist Fernand Crombette (†1970)[109] who made a remarkable attempt to translate the Bible as if the text were Coptic. His translation in no way contradicts the Hebrew version, but enriches it with new insights. It is worth the effort to explore this avenue as an exegetical means that was 'given by God', with the purpose, at the time, of providing a way to facilitate the transition for the Israelites from speaking the Egyptian jumble to speaking Hebrew. It was 'given by God' because it is hard to imagine how these two approaches – the Torah text as Hebrew and the Torah text as Coptic – could exist side by side without conflict or incongruity. For instance, Crombette's translation of Genesis 5:24 goes as follows: *"Only Enoch was brought, full of splendor and power, into the presence of God's countenance. It was prophesied that he would return shortly before the day when God, at the end (of times), will purify a wicked generation by use of fire."* The conventional text goes: *"Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him."*

The other option, that Hebrew evolved out of the Coptic language, as Crombette suggests, goes against the grain of the Jewish tradition and is hard to envisage because Hebrew belongs to the Semitic group of languages and Coptic to the Chamitic group. Classical Hebrew (not the primordial Hebrew) is a flexional language endowed with a precise grammar, whereas Coptic, according to Crombette, is non-flexional. The Coptic, known from the early centuries of Christianity, as it was then current in Egypt, has a precise grammar that differs much from Hebrew.

If, in some way, which is a totally different approach, the Israelites adopted the Canaanite language, which was quite similar to Hebrew, this could only have happened 'after' they settled in the Promised Land and then, of course, the Torah could not have been written by Moses. Consequently the Bible would 'not' be the Word of God. Already the fact that the Hebrew signs can be read in Coptic as well as in Hebrew, without contradicting each other, proves the finger of God. It does not need much imagination to understand the sheer impossibility of the task, at least for humans. In the Merriam-Webster language table, Hebraic is placed after Canaanitic, which surmises that the one evolved into the other. But why should the Israelites have adopted Canaanitic, the language of a people they despised and had driven out? And before they left for Egypt they did not need to, for then they were still a small and tightly-knit clan of herdsmen.

2.17 - Hebrew was Lost again and Revived again

I like to point out, from the evidence presented at the beginning of this article, that a language revival must have happened a third time upon the return of the Jewish people from the Babylonian captivity. Now it was accomplished because of the scribes. It is easily verifiable that the midrashim (sermonic discourses) in the Bet Hamidrash (school) were in Hebrew - at least

109) Crombette (1880-1970) was a scholar redolent of a different age. A self-educated and solitary researcher, who confined himself to his study and his libraries, he dedicated himself to posterity and sought neither to attract attention nor recognition. He therefore signed his publications with "Un Catholique français" (a French Catholic). He left many books, all written between 1933 and 1967 after he had pursued an administrative career. His zeal stemmed from the one motive of proving the scientific and historical inerrancy of the Bible, in the pursuit of which he followed unorthodox ideas. Our main interest here is in his effort to translate the Bible as if it were Coptic, given in his last book published shortly before his death, entitled "La Révélation de la Révélation" (The Revelation of the Revelation). It shows a translation of the first eleven chapters of Genesis and other characteristic passages after they were first transcribed into Coptic.

in the schools of the Promised Land and in Jesus' time. After the return from captivity in the fifth century before Christ it was taught that the ministering angels could only understand the sacred Hebrew and did not wish to ally themselves with anyone expressing himself in Aramaic. (again Sotah 33a) I Corinthians 13:1 refers to this tradition: *"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am like a sounding brass or a clanging cymbal."* At first, prayers were still in Aramaic, but under the stimulating influence of the scribes they progressively changed into Hebrew and in consequence it affected the vernacular. Exception to this development is the current Aramaic closing prayer known by an Aramaic name, the Kaddish, meaning holy, devoted or consecrated, a notion also implied by 'kedusha', a concept that refers to the fate of Israel.

The foregoing shows that speaking Hebrew plays an essential part in the religious observance of the people of Israel. Those two, language and worship, can hardly be dissociated, because otherwise misconceptions in the interpretation of the Tenach, or Old Testament, are the inevitable result. This has always been clearly understood by the spiritual leadership. It is therefore highly unlikely that the vernacular in Jerusalem and its surroundings in Jesus' time would not have been Hebrew. The weight of proof should be with those who claim differently. The following, also, stresses the prime importance of Hebrew as a language, and is taken from the back cover of a prayer tutorial "First Steps in Hebrew Prayer" by Dr. Danny Ben-Gigi and edited by J. L. Horenstein - Hebrew World # 2007-2008:

> «« Our sages spoke about the importance of praying in Hebrew. They taught that even though permission was granted to pray in other languages, it has been always favored to pray in 'Leshon Hakodesh' (the Holy Tongue). In numerous writings since the Biblical era, the Holy Tongue has been known as a reference to the divine spiritual language – Hebrew. The sages taught that it is better to pray in Hebrew, even if one does not understand the words. An ancient 'masoret' (tradition) teaches us that the Hebrew alphabet existed prior to the creation of the world, and that God used the 22 Hebrew letters as raw material for his creation (of which 4 in the DNA script). »»

The final and fourth revival of the Hebrew language happened after the Second World War with the foundation of the modern State of Israel, based on the preparatory work of only one scholar, named Eliezer Ben-Yehuda (1858-1922). Not that Hebrew was a dead tongue previously, but it should be noted that its use was largely restricted to specific fields such as religious worship, but not exclusively so. Hebrew remained the medium in which Jews from the different language groups could correspond with each other, which happened to be advantageous for their commercial contacts between Europe and the Oriental world. Similarly, the literature did not remain silent. Beautiful poems and songs have been written in Hebrew in the Jewish Diaspora. And from the beginning of the 19th century we could witness a new Hebrew literature come into being in the form of stories and novels. Even before Ben-Yehuda started with his work, there were a number of Hebrew periodicals. His great contribution was that he succeeded in giving structure and unity to the Hebrew, whereby he devised a system, Hivrit, to construct new words, fitted to the requirements of our times. His opus magnum was the 17-volume dictionary and thesaurus of Hivrit that was expanded after his death by his wife and son. Due to his efforts, Hivrit was able to become the worldwide and exclusive means of communication of large segments of the Jewish population, which was an important element for the betterment of their bruised feelings of national identity and self-esteem and served to make the Hebrew, in which the Bible is written, much more accessible to the common people.

The Creation is Re-Creation

(a historiographic interpretation)

(Article partly based on an unpublished manuscript of Jacqueline Wels from 1986)

Creation or Evolution? Two camps fight each other: the Darwinists and the Creationists. The Darwinists attribute everything to chance. An untenable position. It is absurd to attribute the emergence of new life forms to blind chance, which are judged on their merits in a kind of knockout race. But the creativeists to are wrong. The opposite of a wrong position does not have to be a good position! Christians should no longer be reluctant to believe in what is called the pre-creation. How can we maintain that God created mankind only 4,000 years before Christ? There were already peoples in existence. It is a mystery when the Bible relates that Adam was the first man. We might as well state that Christ was the first human being, but no one will claim that He was also genetically the first.

To be sure, adaptation and natural selection in the Darwinian sense exist and have a violent and dark nature, but it does not explain the origin of species. Besides, where are the countless transitional forms? [110] ***None of this is found in the sediments, despite the exceptional richness of the fossil record. Rather, it is a burst of evolutionary drift on the threshold of every geological age, which contradicts gradual mutation and natural selection. The initial stages are always characterized by the sudden emergence of many new species. How else than via a predetermined route?***

2.18 – A Rearrangement of what Existed already

A major stumbling block to arriving at a correct understanding of the Biblical creation story is the inadequate interpretation of the verb 'to make'. We see this in Genesis 1:7: *"And God made the firmament",* but also in Exodus *20:11: "For in six days God made*

the heaven and earth, and rested the seventh." The superficial reader is inclined to place 'to make' on the same level as 'to create'. Thus, in the first verse we read: *"In the beginning God created heaven and earth"* or *"...God made heaven and earth."* The Hebrew words for 'create' and 'make' are, however, are completely different. In the first verse the verb 'bara' is used, in the seventh 'asah'.

What is the exact meaning of 'asah' compared to 'bara'? Word number 6213 of Strong's Concordance gives several meanings for asah. These include the word 'appoint' but not 'create'. The word asah is also used when speaking of the clothes that God makes for man, and of clothes that man makes for himself. (Gen. 3:21, Ex. 28:2) It always involves a working on something that already exists, usually to change its form, for instance when trimming someone's mustache or nails. (2 Sam. 19:24, Deut. 21:12) It is a transformation of material that already exists. 'Asah' has other meanings than 'to make' in the general meaning of being involved or working on it. But the usual sense is 'to appoint', which implies that something is given a different application (a bread knife can be used for something else, like cutting vegetables). When we are told that God 'made' the heavens and the earth, we are not supposed to think that this refers to a creation 'in the beginning'. We are justified in seeing this as a re-working of something that existed for a long time, just as the sun and the moon and the stars may very well have existed long before they were 'appointed' to mark the times and the seasons for the new human race. The Exodus text certainly refers to the six-days' making – *"In six days the Lord made the heavens and earth (...) and rested the seventh"*, though not in the sense of seasonal creations 'out of nothing', but as a work of God in which a degraded cosmos was rearranged to serve as a dignified dwelling place again. After this rearrangement was completed, God rested from His 'creative work' (Heb. Melachah) and and handed the task over to the new Man.

2.19 – They are a Smoke in My Nose

Most people have a romanticised picture in mind when they read about the creation of Adam, the new Man. The true facts are far from romantic. The Hebrew words show that God knew what in all likelihood would happen. They are thundering words. The Hebrew is generally open to several interpretations and here every word is so loaded with meaning that the old Masoretes had to do their utmost to make a romanticised text of it. In this context, see Jeremiah 4:19-27 (abridged): *"The alarm of war! Destruction upon destruction, for my people is foolish. I saw the earth. It was without form and void (tohu wa bohu), and*

110) The famous palaeontologist George Gaylord Simpson (†1984) wrote: "The earliest and most primitive known members of every order already have the basic ordinal characters, and in no case is an approximately continuous sequence from one order to another known. In most cases the break is so sharp and the gap so large that the origin of the order is speculative and much disputed." And further: "This regular absence of transitional forms is not confined to mammals, but is an almost universal phenomenon..." Please note that Simpson does not say the absence of, but the 'regular' absence of. An exception to the lack of a transitional record seems to be the gradual evolution of various molluscs through millions of years. See "Tempo and Mode in Evolution" by George Gaylord Simpson, Columbia University Press - New York # 1944, under "Major Systematic Discontinuities of Record" (pp. 105 en 107).

the heavens had no light. There was no human and the birds had fled. The fruitful place had become a wilderness at the presence of Yahweh and by His fierce anger."

There is no question, in the creation account, of a gentle blowing of God's soul or breath (Hebrew: 'neshama') into the nostrils of the clay form that was to become Adam. (Gen. 2:7; Ps. 104:29) It resembles suppressed wrath, compelling an indrawn snort of indignation - with quivering nostrils - that is followed immediately afterwards by a violent blast. Compare with Psalm 18:15 and II Samuel 22:16: *"Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at Thy rebuke, Oh Lord, at the blast of the breath of Thy nostrils."* The blowing out, however, to blow the soul in, comes from God's mouth and not from his nostrils, because the Bible says: *"Man (Hebrew: 'adam') lives by all that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord."* (Deut. 8:3)

On the first page of the Bible we learn that the 'beasts' of the field were around and that there was 'moisture' or 'vapour' on the earth. It is not common vapour. The text indicates that the peoples already existing were working with all kinds of witchcraft and occultism. They were not human in the original meaning of the word. They were animal-like without the characteristics and moral standards of the ideal human nature, which originally was created differently. The Hebrew 'ad' for 'vapour' or 'mist' is a key word. It is used only one other time, in Job 36:27, where in a straightforward way it represents moisture. In Genesis it indicates equivalent meanings of words, such as in the Zechariah 3 text, where Joshua is likened to a brand snatched from the fire (the Hebrew for brand reverts to 'ad' with a soundless 'vav' in the middle). David says in a Psalm that he feels like a leather bag (nô'ad) in the smoke. Ad is vapour, but vapour with a destructive effect; it is actually a cloud of smoke. Obviously this should not be taken as a weather condition. Destructive smoke relates to fire, like in Acts 2:19 where the Greek atmis is used: *"I will show wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath. Blood and fire and vapour of smoke."* Atmis appears only one other time, in James 4:14: *"For what is the life of a human? A cloud of smoke that appears for a little while and then vanishes away."* Indeed, not very complimentary and therefore the translation is usually toned down with a term like vapour, but it need not be understood that way.

Fire and heat indicate demonic presence in the rites. The Jews make their food wholesome (kosher) according to the prescriptions of biblical law that speak of cooking utensils *"that can stand the fire",* following the principle that heating conquers all forms of demonism. 'Ad' or smoke confirms that the peoples of the pre-creation practised initiation and other related wickedness. See Isaiah 65:3-5: *"A people that provoketh Me (...) and remain among the graves (...) they are a smoke in My nose."* Most religions have their own Paradise account. The Biblical one is meant as an antitype.

2.20 – The Gap Theory

No, the world of the pre-creation was not a happy place. The Bible reports in the first verse of Genesis that God created the heavens and the earth. The next verse proceeds to speak of only one of them, leaving the heaven entirely out of consideration. Both were

created ‘in the beginning’, but the earth, at some time, and by some means, and from some unmentioned cause, became *“desolate and empty”*, in Hebrew: ‘tohu wa bohu’. From tohu alone it appears that the earth was in a desolate state that could not have existed in the very beginning, dealt with in the first verse. It would seem that creation had turned into something that was not according to the original plan. Does not Isaiah 45:18 say emphatically that *“God did not create the earth to be desolate (tohu)”*? A remarkable fact in this context is that Genesis 1:2 ends with: *“And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.”* Hovering can also be translated by ‘brooding’, as on an egg, which points to a new start, a re-creation! From this approach the story of creation can be rendered as: “It was 14 billion years ago that God created heaven and earth.” We see the same creating in the first verses of the Gospel of John, written in Greek: *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was Life, and the Life was the Light of men.”*

After Genesis 1:1, in the translation we place brackets around the first half of the next verse: (*“The earth was without form, and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep.”*) We could regard this sentence as a gap situated outside our scope. It is placed between brackets because it is incidental to the intentions of the divine writer. We would dearly love to know more about this episode, but God wishes to focus the reader’s attention on something else. In the end it is not a question of encyclopaedic knowledge but of the operation needed to restore what His hands made. Placing the brackets around the first part of the second verse greatly clarifies things. The verse in question can be explained thus: In the historical evolution since the very BEGINNING – which we will not dwell on – the world and its inhabitants fell into a miserable condition..

This approach can be called a revolution in theology, but it is not unfounded. Unfortunately, in this case, the pre-Christian Septuagint translation from Hebrew into Greek has wrong-footed all the Bible translators. The authoritative Septuagint is an major resource for finding out how the Hebrew should be translated, but it is not perfect. The Septuagint translates the Hebrew verb ‘hajah’ in Genesis 1 with an inflection of the Greek ‘ginomai’ (to happen, to become), except in verse 2 where a passive hyphen is applied so that it becomes in Greek: *“the earth was without form (or desolate)”.* Where a passive state is involved, it is the normal way in Hebrew to omit the verb. “I am sick” or “I was sick” then becomes “I sick”. No more. Thus ‘hajah’ for an active condition may not simply be translated with ‘was’. In French it should read: “La terre fut informée” and in English: “The earth had become without form”.

In verse 2, therefore, there is a pluperfect tense (had become), but without the hyphen before of the Hebrew letter vav (and, but), which means that in the first two verses of the chapter there is no logical-orderly narrative, involving verbs linked together, as later in the creation story. From a linguistic point of view, it is not about two states, creation and desolation, that follow naturally from one another; instead there is a contrast, even an irreconcilable contradiction. The ‘vav’ at the beginning of the second verse should therefore be best translated as ‘nevertheless’, and not by ‘now’ as in some translations: *“Now the*

earth was without form and void." A correct translation is: *"Yet, the earth had become without form."* How different it would have been if there had been *"watehi ha-arets",* with a 'vav' before the imperfect tense, but that is not so. If it had been so, the narration of the creation event would have been something like this: *"In the beginning, God created heaven and earth. And then suddenly the earth appears, still completely unformed and empty, like the clay that the potter still needs to mould in order to create a pot."* But again, that is not what is written!! [111)]

After reading: *"Yet, the earth had become without form, darkness was over the surface of the deep."* we arrive at the last part of the second verse, which is joined to verse 3 (the division in verses is aleatory). We then read:: *"The Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said: Let there be light. And there was light."* This we explain as follows: «« The Spirit of God saw this misery. Thousands of years ago when things went of the rails – vis-à-vis Moses who, inspired by God, wrote this down – God's plan of salvation for the world took a new start. Therefore God said: Let there be light! And, behold, the light shone in the darkness. »» This agrees with the first chapter verse 5 of Saint John's Gospel: *"The light shines in the darkness - and the darkness did not comprehend it."*

The 'without form' or 'without form and void', as in most translations, is in Hebrew 'Tohu wa Bohu'. The desolate oblivion is made up of two terms. The ghastly whore of Apocalypse seated on the beast is the real significance of these words. They are like two beasts from the abyss. Bohu occurs never without Tohu, and they belong certainly in the story of creation, because there they indicate the sea-monster that inevitably dwells in the water depths. It is there, in the immeasurable depth of evil, that the baptism, directed against God, is administered. The other term, bohu, has the same significance as Behomat or Baphomet (one of the names of Satan). It is also the Leviathan or dragon who is one and the same terrifying monster that dwells in the deepest seas. It is also androgynous: simultaneously male and female. Bohu agrees with the mythical concept of the chaos. Tohu & Bohu together are the religious twofold chaos of the oldest initiation rites. The Jewish tradition states that they include a state of astonishment and confusion, a state of total bewilderment. The human subconscious is described as such. In imagery the initiation goes back to this chaos belonging to the dragon and to the whorish goddess. The allegorical dragon and the goddess-whore, described in the Book of Revelation, are part of the primitive religious philosophy, called Gnosis. It is therefore the image of pure paganism. The chaos, the beast and the whore are the frightful company of the dead and confront the one who is initiated. The symbolic return to the chaos, the First Cause, accords with the idolatrous baptism in order to come into contact with the dead, who present to us the ancestral bills. It is precisely these bills that have been cancelled in Jesus suffering on the Cross, providing the guarantee for restoration. The going back to the beast and the whore,

111) These two sections are taken from an essay from 2009: "De Bijbel letterlijk leren lezen, een bijdrage aan de Darwindiscussie over het scheppingsverhaal" (Learning to read the Bible literally, a contribution to the Darwinian discussion on the story of creation) by Rev. Roelof Strijker (1925-2013).

particularly the chaos, is encoded in Biblical language as the return, the retreat, the going or falling backward. Doesn't the Bible have many healing allegories to address this?

2.21 – The Unity of the Anointed Couple

We are back again with the first human couple. God created Adam from the dust of the earth. (Gen. 2:7) By way of exception and matching his special mission, Adam had no ancestors, just like Melchizedek. (Gen. 14:18, Hebr. 5:5-6) No creation ex nihilo, but a resplendent transformation, in such a way that it became a creating. As far as the Woman is concerned, the Hebrew does not say that God 'made' her from Adam's rib but that He 'created' her from the rib, with the word for rib (tsela) having other meanings, possibly 'ovum' (egg). By the way, Hebrew is the language of God and not a language derived from something else, and therefore the translation of ovum is permitted. Since the union of the couple was a true unity of thought and action in a way beyond our understanding, we are allowed to use the singular form for 'Adam and his Woman'. Therefore 'him' in Psalm 8:6 refers to both of them: *"You made 'him' rulers over the works of your hands."*

The Gap-Theory from a Traditional Jewish Perspective

The Gap-Theory or Ruin-Reconstruction interpretation is a theological explanation much older than Darwin's theory of evolution. It is based on the scriptural fact that in the second verse of Genesis 1, it simply and clearly states that the planet Earth was already here - but in a ruined state - before the seven days' creative process was put into motion. The Gap-Theory is also found in the Judaica. Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan explains in a booklet "Kabbalah and the age of the Universe" :

«« The following approach is that of the Ma'areches Elokus, mentioned earlier. The first possuk of the Torah tells us: *"In the beginning God created the Heaven and Earth."* However, it does not tell us what happened in the years that followed, continuing: *"The Earth was tohu and bohu..."* The Midrash explains this to be speaking of "the Earth which already existed", since *"there was an order of time before this."* Thus, in between *"In the beginning God created..."* and *"God's Spirit hovered on the face of the water"*, there is an unspecified number of years, perhaps even as many as 15 bln years. The principle of there being a hiatus between one event and another is evident elsewhere in the Torah. For example, in Parashas Chukas, the Parah Adumah and the death of Miriam are placed next to each other in the text, whereas there was a gap of forty years between one event and the other. (Num. 20:1) Although this is not as many as 15 billion years, the principle is the the same. There is still another argument. The Masoretes brought in a small mark, known as the rebia, following Genesis 1:1, to warn the reader that there is a break in the narrative at this point, and that he should pause before going on to the next verse. In view of the rebia, the beginning of verse 2 should start with 'but' or 'yet'. »» (pp. 37-38)

Renza Giacobbi, in her commentary on the writings of Don Guido Bortoluzzi (1907-1991), writes about the special way of creating the Anointed Couple: [112)]

> «« What is important to see is that to give origin to the first Man, God created 'both the male and female gametes'. But later, to create the first Woman, He created 'only

> the ovule' in the ancestor mother's womb, since the spermatozoa was made available by the Young Man [Adam]. We may remember that the Almighty God made Adam fall into a deep sleep, as says the Mosaic Genesis, so that he may not remember what happened with that female, in order not to repeat that union any more. This way God created also a hierarchy. Before: the Man, as head of family and head of mankind. And after: the Woman. The special incubator-female [an animal species], after those two direct exceptional interventions of God, kept all her properties and her genes. So she remained always able to generate from the ancestral line pups of the pure ancestor race; and from Man, hybrid sons following the laws of heredity studied by Mendel. This was the reason why she should not have had intercourse with any male of the [elevated] human species, after having served as an instrument of God to give birth to the human species. »»

Dust is 'afar' in Hebrew. 'Afar' and 'ofra' are related to each other. The angel who came to Gideon could be seen at Ofra. The Queen of Sheba brought gold from Ofir or Ofra (spelt differently in Hebrew from the Ofra of Gideon). Gold dust can be the meaning of 'afar' or dust that shines with a golden gleam, though not exactly so. It points to what it should become. The snake in Paradise is condemned to eating dust and to remain earth-bound and bound in form. He can never aspire to the higher Heavenly spheres. Dust points to the body, gold-dust to the Heavenly body that does not know the cycle of death and birth. The Paradise Curse reveals that Adam and his Mannin came from dust and will return to dust, at least for the time being…[113)] Surprisingly, the mission of the two remained intact after they had failed. Therefore the Messiah, son of Adam (which also means the human), is rightly called the second Adam and the Virgin Mary the second Eve, in order to fulfill where the first ones had failed. (see 1 Cor. 15:47) It is remarkable that Jesus had only one parent, and thus the unity between Mary and Jesus and that between Adam and his first pure offspring was greater than between a common child and its mother.

Genesis 1:26-27 states in the plurality of the Holy Trinity: *"Let 'Us' make Man in Our image, according to Our likeness. (…) in His image in the image of God He created him."* Among the Greek Church Fathers there was generally a distinction drawn between the image and the likeness: man is created in the image, and his destiny in freedom is to achieve a likeness to God. (Origen: "On first principles" 3:6:1) Since the text repetition is silent about the precise meaning of the term likeness, it can only mean that the likeness

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112) Note to § 94 of the 2007 English Genesis Edition of the writings of Don Guido Bortoluzzi. See: "An Evaluation of the Biblical Genesis - From the Writings of Don Guido Bortoluzzi, with commentary by Renza Giacobbi". Original text in Italian; as well as: "Creation - Book of Genesis - Clarifications of the Origin of Man". From the writings of Don Guido Bortoluzzi with critical remarks by Hubert Luns. Illuminated with quotes from the writings of Blessed Anna Katharina Emmerick, also of Jasher and Enoch, plus those of Maria Valtorta. Placed on the Internet.

113) In this piece the reader is confronted with the expression "Man - Mannin", sometimes with "Adam - Mannin" and also "Adam - Adamah", in an attempt to translate the Hebrew "ish - isha" which usually is being translated with man-woman. I believe that Luther was the first to translate 'isha' with mannin. In English, "Man & Wo-man" seems appopriate, and in French, "l'homme et la haoma". The Haoma is a tree in Iran whose milky sap is considered an elixir of life. It is also a common stylistic pattern representing the tree of life, which is 'etz ha-chayyim' in Hebrew.

was appointed (asah) as something to be achieved by the individual and wrought out in life, initially by being faithful to the command: *"...of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat".* (Gen. 2:17) Upon violation of the command, the anointed couple, while remaining image-bearer, lost the likeness in the 'total agreement with God's will'. It is this agreement, the universal FIAT – the 'fiat Voluntas tua' or 'Thy will be done' – that has now to be fought for in a different way, much more painful and dramatic than God first had in mind. When the couple was expelled from Paradise, they still retained the anointing. (Lam. 4:20) Hence, God's image was preserved in their posterity, but our likeness to God was increasingly violated in a downward spiral of human self-interest and excessive egoism. While God made Adam after his Own, Adam's children were in their father's human image and likeness. (Gen. 5:1-3) And thus they bore the consequences of the violation of the command, in what is called the original sin.

> As regards the human species, the crown of creation, we see no evolution, but devolution or degeneration, though this is also not without effect on the lower order of creation: after all, everything is one family, everything affects everything else. The tarnishing of the universe as we observe it, cannot be blamed on God, as if his work of creation was imperfect. The Biblical creation story is therefore a recreation story.

The Jewish scribe Rashi tells in a well-known explanation that Man was made with a stamp (the clay form) like a coin which is made by a die, yet all replicas are different! Jesus said of the coin in his hand that the regal image stamped upon it means that it belongs to the Roman Emperor. (Luke 20:23-25) The divine image stamped upon man means likewise that he belongs to God, and not only that but rather that he ought to belong to God as a son to his father. God is not the father of his creatures merely because He made them, for He also made the beasts. But those are not his sons. Unlike those, 'Adam and Adamah' was made in the image of God. As regards the aspect of the likeness, after their expulsion from Paradise, in successive generations it had to be lifted up in the school of painful experience, but not without God's blessings. It was exclusively and only Christ, and we with Him and in Him, who could accomplish this fully, holding up a mirror showing us where the apostasy had led us to.

The force of Satan's initial temptation was that Man could attain the stage of understanding, which belongs to the likeness, on his own, for he said: *"If you eat of the fruit you will be like God."* In wisdom the anointed couple was perfect. Intuitively they always knew what was good, but they were imperfect in their understanding, to which also the knowledge of the spiral of evil belongs (evil leads to subsequent evil). This insight would have been given them by God at the appropriate time as a free gift.[114)] Says Luisa Piccarreta: *"If Adam (...) had remembered God's Love at the moment of temptation, they would not have succumbed."* They would have seen through Satan's lie, knowing that God is the generous giver of all gifts.

The two, who were created in Paradise, were not the first human beings. They were the first 'humans' in the idealistic calling of how they ought to have been or rather had to

become, far above anything ever reached. This sounds far-fetched perhaps, yet is not unbiblical. Cain became a fugitive among the nations who, by any logical standard, could not be kin.[115] Adam and the Wo-man were created because they had a vocation for the humanlike race that already existed at the time (Pygmees, Bushmen, etc.), with whom they later mixed. The Paradise story is about a human, the Anointed One of the God who is One. God made that person together with the Wo-man his partner in his plan of creation. Psalm 8 says: *"You have made him (the human couple) a little lower than God and have crowned him with glory and honour."* Stunningly, Adam and the Wo-man were near-equal to God. He created them as majestic beings who were to rule over the work of his hands. On balance the 'unity' of the two had to be an antitype to the serpent, who is in the image of the unfolding struggle – from bad to worse, ending with the nuclear bomb and the self-opinionated disposal over life and death. Think of the authorised abortion hecatomb and assisted suicide.

Eve is sometimes called Adamah instead of Isha or Woman, because she was taken from the human or Ish. (Gen. 2:23) The Adamah, who came from the side of Adam, is an image of the Church, bride of Christ, taken from his side when He was pierced on Golgotha. God, who is One, anointed this Man/Mannin duality, that was one flesh, to be the one Man. When Adam received his Mannin, their unity was emphasized. This unity was in the image of likeness to God, which consisted for them of a lovingly and all-encompassing unity in thinking, feeling and doing, not only between Adam and Adamah reciprocally, but also between the sublime couple and God. Because of this supreme unity the couple may be rightly called divine. Usually nobody gives a thought to the unity of the Triune God (let Us make), which is the basis of his creation of image and likeness, the basis of the mystical unity between Christ and his Church, as superbly formulated in the high-priestly prayer: *"That they all may be One, as You, Father are in Me, and I in You. (...) And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be One (ut unum sint) just as We are One: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in One."* (John 17:21-23) Although, within the secular church, this exalted unity is still hidden in

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114) There are three stages of knowledge: wisdom, intellectual understanding and pure knowledge. If cows are given the choice between GM-food (genetically modified) and ordinary food, they will always opt for the ordinary food and even break down fences to get at it, even though science can discover no external difference. Do cows understand what they do? No, but they are certainly wise. In an encyclopaedia we find pure knowledge, but an encyclopaedia understands nothing and is not wise. Why are these three stages reserved to human beings? It is because God has endowed our souls with memory, will and intellect. It is through free will that man can resemble God, for it is through the consensus of mutual will that the Divine Trinity is One.

115) In Genesis 4, Cain curses God after killing his brother. God says that henceforth Cain will be a fugitive and vagabond on the earth, to which Cain replies: "What am I to do? All those who find me will kill me. My life has no future". A Jewish interpretation is that 'all those' refers to the beasts of the field. But this interpretation contradicts the next verse that whoever kills Cain will be avenged sevenfold. The Jewish scribe Rashi explains this, which fits with verse 24: "Cain will be avenged when seven generations have passed". Whatever, why would God take revenge on an animal that is simply following its instinct? 'All those', therefore, refers to people, those of the pre-creation.

the present dispensation, it is still recognized in those believers who live this unity together with his or her Christ.

In their vocation, Adam and Adamah were serving in a tabernacle service, which is a way of saying that they were ordained to bring the human offspring into the presence of God. They also had to mediate between the holiest of holies and the pre-created humanoids, somewhat similar to the ordained priesthood of later ages, to effect a fusion between the two. Vouching for the holiness of their office, that of bringing the conscience of both humans and humanoids to rest in the ranking order of the kings, their cry was: *"Lord, spare thine inheritance!"* (Joel 2:17) Today there are no more humanoids. To put things right: *"We have all sinned and we all fall short of the glory of God."* (Rom. 3:23-24) Their vocation was to be One, in particular by representing the One Anointing of the One God. They had to reveal God's Love for a world made up of dualities, or as Darwin put it: engaged in a struggle for survival. Therefore, God needed a representation to show his Oneness. Adam and Adamah were anointed to take up this vocation.

The Ranking Order of Kings

Deuteronomy 16:18 to 21:9 explains the ranking order of kings. Deuteronomy 17:8-13 discusses the divine constitutional and moral law and its central explanatory and priestly authority. Deuteronomy 17:14-20 treats the God-chosen king who should fear God in the performance of his duties. He represents the supreme political authority and as such he should fear God and be fearless of humans, as has been pointed out by the beloved Marie Leckzinska (1703-1768), Queen of France: *"Human indulgence, to be condemned in all Christians, becomes a true apostasy in those who have been placed in a position to command and to instruct."* Deuteronomy 18:9-22 discusses the prophetic guidance to which both the political and priestly spheres should be attentive. These are the three Biblical categories of anointed ones. In the case of prophets, the Bible places less emphasis on the rite of anointing but rather on the gift of the Holy Spirit. With Adam and the Adamah all three functions were fulfilled in the 'one' couple in a close spirit of unity and lovingness.

When Genesis 2:7 emphasizes that Adam *"became a living being"* (or soul), we get an idea of what the peoples of old believed (irrespective of their origins). It happened that when a king died they tried to preserve his anointing through his exhaled last breath.[116] This belongs to the so-called 'primitive gnosis' in which breath, the anointing and the soul are of equal significance. In this way, it was hoped to bring to a higher level the soul of an ordinary mortal – that had been separated from the full knowledge of God – and thus secure the kingship 'by the grace of God'! Adam and Adamah were one living soul, antitype to this dead soul![117] In him and his companion was the Anointing of the Holy One, and they knew all things intuitively; knowing God they had eternal life, for it is written: *"This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God."* (John. 17:3, 1 John 2:13; 20-25) Yet, the well-nigh impossible happened. They went from life on the way to death, from knowing God to not knowing Him. Thus we can speak of a dead soul, a soul that gropes in the dark about God and his ways.[118]

If it says that Eve, which means 'Life-giver', became the mother of all the living (Gen. 3:20), it means nothing more nor less than that she was the Matriarch of all those who love and know God. In this sense it is logical that Jesus entrusted all his children to his mother, who was in the image of Adamah. Hanging on the cross, looking at Mary and John, the beloved disciple, Jesus uttered these words: *"Woman, here is your son"* and also: *"Behold your mother."* Thus he wished, as it were, to say: "My mother, I entrust to you all my children. Give to them all the love that you showed Me. Give my children all the devotion and tenderness of a mother. You will saveguard them all for Me."

But what do we do with it? How to thank God for such immeasurable favour? O Blessed Virgin, how deeply touched and joyful we are, to know you as a mother. Be a mother to us! As Luisa Piccarreta explained in "The Twenty-Four Hours of the Passion of Christ" :

> «« Do we internalize the love and devotion in all just like Jesus did, in order to please his mother? Can we say that our divine mother finds in us the satisfaction she

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116) In connection with the view that the king's last breath contained the anointing, I draw your attention to the words of the Blessed Virgin to J.N.S.R. (Je Ne Suis Rien / I am nothing), shown in the booklets "Acts of the Apostles": «« After I received the lifeless Divine Corpse of my Child in my arms, I bent over his adorable face, just above his sacred lips, to give Him my motherly kiss. Then my heart stopped beating and I tasted the death of my son, of my God, my cherised child who had died to sin. For a moment God allowed me drink the bitterness of his holy death, until the moment when, as I approached his most holy mouth, I received the divine breath of his immortal soul that that gave me back life. If Man's life starts with a breath; likewise it ends with a breath that thereby becomes the eternal life in God. Where do you notice a cessation? It is the same breath. God gives life. God does not take back life but extends it in his own life, the eternal life in God. When Jesus with the "Father, in your hands I command my Spirit" breathed out the last breath, the Son of Man entrusted his Spirit in that breath to God his father, and it came to pass that in that same breath the Son of God revealed Himself in his immortal soul in favour of his Holy Mother, to whom He handed over his first spark of life. »»

117) Don Guido Bortoluzzi wrote in a note: «« On the 8th June 1972, I was present in the Great Hall of the Seminary at a lecture on genetic microbiology relative to hereditary defects that condition human behaviour. Professor Giambattista Marson, head of the department of dermatology at the Belluno Hospital, was explaining how in America examination of the body cells of those condemned to life sentences revealed that some of them, instead of having the normal XY chromosomes, had, in addition, a smaller one, a Y. On account of which the scientists wondered how that "Y" had entered the human genetic patrimony, making any person who was in possession of one unbalanced. I then intervened, saying: "We are believers, and for us it is quite certain that He who has guided the evolution of living creatures up to the summits of the phylum, has put into being a human creature that was perfect and intended to be the champion for all his descendants. If today there are found cases of ancestral peculiarities, that is due to the fact that the champion, who in Earthly Paradise goes under the name of the genealogical 'Tree of Life', had progenitive relations with the 'Wild Tree', which could have produced good fruit with God's intervention and would produce bad fruit without it: that is, hybrids, bastards..." I could not continue because a senior professor of biblical exegesis, Father Angelo Santin, interrupted me, saying: "We are not prepared for this line!" »» (Note to § 28 of the English Genesis Edition of the writings of don Guido Bortoluzzi, edited by Renza Giacobbi # 2007, see: www.genesibiblica.eu)

118) The God-given guarantee of knowing his way is the infused knowledge of the Ten Commandments. However, the detailed elaboration is not without problems.

found in Christ? Are we always with her like faithful children? Do we obey her? Are we imitating her virtues? Are we seeking every good means to never escape her motherly gaze, so that she will always flatter us against her Son? In everything we do, do we call out Mary's gaze to guide us; in order to live a holy life under her pious gaze as befits true children? That we may please our mother as her son did, let us ask Jesus for all the affection He had for his mother with the glory He continually gave her along with tender and delicate manifestations of love. Let us make all of this our own to be able to say to our Heavenly mother: "We have Jesus within us. So that you may be happy to find in us all that you found in Jesus, we give you everything, O my mother. We also want to offer Jesus all the delights that He found in you. That's why we want to enter into your heart and take your love and all your joys, your motherly devotion, in order to offer them to Jesus. O my mother, that your maternal hands may be the soft chains that bind us to you and to Jesus!" »»

Finding the Child – William Hunt (Sudley House)

Now back to the anointed couple. Adam, with the golden gloss of kingship, was made a living soul together with his Wo-man. After the fall and clothed with a devalued anointing, they were walking like people groping on earth like blind people. God's plan of re-creation had thus begun in the midst of desolate emptiness… The royal priesthood had thus been established on earth, and it served as a counterweight to the spiral of evil. God's visible history and his helping hand for this struggling world had begun. That's what the Genesis story is about.[119)] The serpent, who in the fertility rites represents the concept of development and progress, did not remain silent, making use of the medium of the word through its idolatrous and deified couple. That legendary couple is known as Tehom and Tiamat.[120)] Clearly, he wanted to harness the very powerful divine or anointed dual oneness (single-voicedness) of Adam and Adamah and use it for his own ends. Tehom and Tiamat strive to overpower Adam and his Mannin and their progeny. In essence, it is a seizing of the power, known as 'the hand on the Throne of the Lord'.

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119) Jewish tradition usually situates the start of God's reign with the creation of the anointed couple, thus on the 6th day of creation, the moment also that sees the start of the Anno Mundi calendar. This explains why within festive Jewish cycle the celebration of New Year or Rosh Ha-shana (1 Tishrei) is focussed on the creation of the (new) world, known as God's kingdom on earth. However, that kingdom will not be completed until the complete agreement of the will between Creator and his created being will be achieved. The "Our Father Thy Kingdom come" prayer was appropriately bestowed upon us by Jesus on that special occasion of Rosh Ha-shana, as shown in Matthew 6. For Christians it is not evident that this chapter refers to Rosh Ha-shana and its accompanying Day of Atonement ritual, but for those who grew up with the Jewish feasts it is a matter of course, that is, until Matthew 6:19. From that verse on it apparently deals with the considerations pertaining to the Feast of Tabernacles.

Spirit and Breath

In Job 27:3 it is written: *"The spirit of God is in my nostrils."* This refers to the fertility rites where the nose is the instrument of handing on and of the beginning of life. Sometimes a dying king would have his successor so close to him that on the moment of death he could take into his own nose the dying king's last breath. They did this only in the case of kings. The nose was considered so sacred that the Egyptians saw it as the holiest of holies. Dr Wilhelm Fliess, a close friend of Freud, saw the nose as the most important organ and even believed that his patients could be relieved from all kinds of physical ills by a simple nose operation!

By breathing in the last breath of his predecessor through the nostrils, the successor felt sure to have inherited the kingship and received the accompanying capacities (the anointing) to exercise its functions of rulership and priesthood properly (in ancient times the rulers were king-priests). The one who in this manner captured the last breath had become equal to the late king and felt confident to have acquired a divine countenance. In the abridged version of "The Golden Bough - A Study in Magic and Religion" (ch. 27: The Succession to the Soul) Sir James Frazer mentions an example of the breathing in of the last breath of the dying king by the people of Nias, an island North-West of Sumatra in the Indonesian archipelago, but he does not mention whether this specific custom was also observed elsewhere or in a distant past. Based on the Biblical evidence, I think this was not an isolated case.

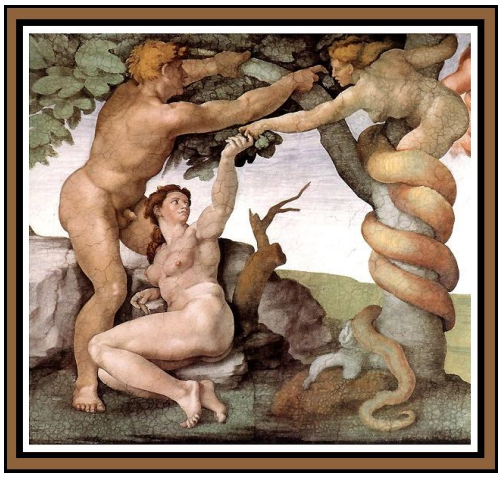
2.22 – The Paradise Curse

And thus the breath, but in this case the anointed breath that God breathed into the nose, brought Adam forth, a living soul. God, with giving his breath, conveyed of his own essence to Adam. That breath, or whatever it is supposed to represent, penetrates everything according to the rules of the primitive gnosis. The name Adam can be written as 'Aleph-dam' or 'Aleph in the blood', with aleph being the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet representing the divine. God is the beginning and the end, the alpha and the omega, the aleph and the tau. We can therefore say that Adam means 'the Anointing in Man' or simply 'the Anointed One', a justifiable explanation because the soul of the flesh is in the blood. (Lev. 17:11) We had to wait for Jesus Christ (Christ is the Greek for anointed one), another anointed one, to bring Adam's work to completion. The mirror image in the Hebrew spelling of aleph is 'pala', meaning 'the hidden, which is secret, miraculous, mysterious, hidden from all eyes'. In Isaiah 9, one of the four titles of the Messiah is 'pala jooz' or 'wonderful counselor'.

It should be clear that the whole person, head and body, is involved in the Anointing. It is not just a drop of oil poured over the head that can be washed away, not some quick operation that can be undone if one fails to come up to expectations. The whole person is involved. If the anointed one falls, the Anointing falls with him. If this person, in parti-

120) Tiamat (Hebrew: תְּהוֹם, Greek: ábyssos, orginally Akkadian) is a primeval monster/goddess in Babylonian and Sumerian mythology, and a central figure in the Enûma Elish creation epic. John C. L. Gibson notes (in the Ugaritic glossary of Canaanite Myths and Legends) that the word tehom appears in the Ugaritic texts of 1400–1200 BC, simply meaning sea. Such a depersonalised Tiamat (the -at ending makes her feminine) is 'the deep or abyss' (Hebrew: tehom), present at the beginning of the Book Genesis.

cular Adam and his Wo-man, is captured, the Anointing is captured with him. If this person dies, the Anointing goes down together with him into the grave, which is why *"The breath of our nostrils (nose), the anointed of the Lord (that is, the whole Man), was taken in their pits". "In the graves of all"* is also possible. The graves of all are captured in the realm of the collective soul. Singular is changed into plural. From then on we have to consider the multiplication sign and the collective element. The human community is implicated in the fall and - for that day we yearn - will also be implicated in the recovery. Remember Isaiah's seventh and final act that starts with chapter 56 of his book. This piece underscores the salvation of Jerusalem and Zion. It so happens that the anointed of the Lord announces (Is. 61:1): *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted and to proclaim the opening of the prison to those who are bound."* Then, in Isaiah's final act it is the apotheosis, last chapter as from 66:7: *"Shall a nation be born at once? But (affirms the Lord's judgement) Zion was in labour and she gave birth to her sons."* For the time being the nations are groaning under the weight of the paradise curse. The curse has not yet turned into a blessing.



This is what the paradise curse is all about. Adam and his Wo-man were "the whole Man". Together in a spirit of agreement they were the Lord's Anointed One. The cleavage, this unworldly close alliance as mentioned in Genesis 2:24, was cloven. The Anointing was by that also cloven (to cleave or stick fast and to cleave or break apart are the same Hebrew word dabak). Adam and Adamah formed one body and the following came into existence at the cleaving: Adam is now the 'head' and Adamah the 'body'. The sundered duality (Man/Wo-man) was given the present meaning of head-body, mind-intuition, male-female, and it became a mighty weapon in the hands of the enemy. He is the ruler of that degenerate region in which we all wander. This duality can be found in Genesis: *"The man shall rule over the woman",* which in itself is not wrong when interpreted correctly, but which has become a horror in its practical implementation. In Jewish tradition this relationship between Adam and Adamah is like the relationship between Man and soil (Adamah means 'soil' in Hebrew). As he rules over the woman, he rules over the earth and abuses her. The 'head' that has become a personality in its own right, is now the opponent of the 'body', which in turn received a personality in its own right. He is the head. She, as the body, will know what suffering is. She shall diminish while he shall increase. In the secret language of the Mystery Services, irrespective of time, culture and place, this follows the formula: "via decay comes reconstruction", and it explains the price to be paid for so-called progress. By means of all kinds of acts a person is 'broken down' to give place to the 'enlightened man'. 'Solve et Coagula', as the Masonic adage goes. The adage refers to the hideous Baphomet, a

depiction of Lucifer, who has written these words on his upper arms, which means that destruction precedes a building up, which refers not only to the individual personality but to all social connections and the nations that together form our world. This means that the social order must be destroyed in the broadest sense of the word so that a new society with a new human being can take shape.

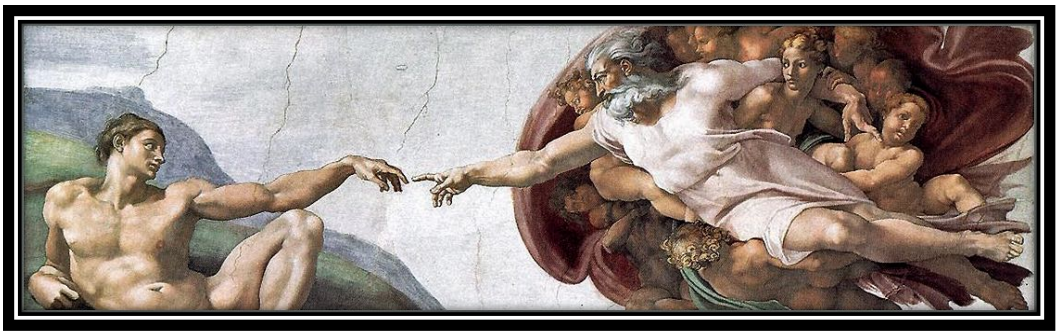
It reveals the raging struggle whose ultimate outcome is a sure thing since the event on Calvary. Then once again the cleaving between man and woman and between Christ and them will take shape in a way that is completely unimaginable to us, as it now has been accomplished between Jesus and Mary, who cleave together as did Adam and Adamah of old. It is therefore that the apostle says: *"This a great mystery, but for me I speak concerning Christ and the Church."* (Eph. 1:22-23, 5:23-32; John 17:21-26) Yes, in Christ we are more than victorious!!

The Apostle Paul is the author of the Epistle to the Ephesians. An important tradition designates Ephesus as the place where the Virgin Mary spent her last years. The fact that this letter has the Church as its theme fits well with this. After all, Mary is the guardian of the Church as with a mother who watches over her offspring. The texts in Ephesians point to the head-body duality which is the image of Christ and his Church:

> «« He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all. (…) The husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the Church; and He is the Savoir of the body. Therefore, just as the Church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or winkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the Church. For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. For this reason (and according to Genesis 2:24) *"a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."* This a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church. »» (Eph. 1:22, 5:23-32)

The Gospel of John deals with the same theme:

> «« That they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father! Though the world has not known You, I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them. »» (John 17:21-26)



2.23 – In Christ More than Victorious

It cannot be emphasized enough that the ordinary human, in Christ, is the gateway to the divine. To pass through that gate we must be spiritual people, snatched from the compulsion of the flesh. Flesh stands over against spirit as form does against content. In other words, are we formal or true? It is not the rules and regulations that matter, for it is the letter that kills and the spirit that makes alive. (2 Cor. 3:6) One would be inclined to conclude that on this road to God the transcendent experience is a good characterization of what the Apostle Paul calls the spirit in the seventh and eighth chapters of the epistle to the Romanst; that it is an even better term for identifying the contemporary Christian religious experience. But that is incorrect. The transcendent presupposes a rise above our being beyond the constraints of our human condition. If that were correct, then Christ's resurrection and ascension would have been in vain! Christ became flesh and remained so in his resurrection precisely in order to attain the experience of God in our humanity as God also, yes also, intended it for us. We should not want to rise above the human, but be moved by the Spirit 'in' the human. That can only occur in the encounter with Jesus Christ. Christianity is, without a hint of bigotry, a relational religion. Christ has made Himself accountable in the way of men. This is an important fact: that God, Who is indeed transcendental, has allowed Himself to be caught in the human and calls us his brothers and sisters. Where this will lead to in the future is beyond our comprehension, because the growth curve of the human – joined together in the divine – is infinite. After all, the human soul, a reflection (image) of the divine, carries within itself the potential of infinity. Because God is wedded to the human in the God-man, He has been made accessible for everyone, so that every person has been given the opportunity to accept Christ's atoning sacrifice in order to penetrate ever more into God's being. In this way, the dividing line between slave and master, immigrant and native, has been overturned.

The address given to the Ecclesial Congress of the Diocese of Rome on 26th May 2009 by Pope Benedict XVI included the following words:

> «« The Second Vatican Council, wishing to pass on the pure and integral doctrine on the Church, matured over the course of two thousand years, gave it *"a more meditated definition",* illustrating mostly its mysterious nature, that is, as *"a reality imbued with the divine presence, and for this always capable of new and deeper explorations"*.[121)] That is, the Church, which has her origin in the Trinitarian God, is a mystery of communion. As a communion, the Church is not a solely spiritual

> reality, but lives in history, that is to say, in flesh and blood. The Second Vatican Council describes her *"as a sacrament, or sign and instrument of the intimate union with God and of unity with the entire human race".* (Lumen Gentium 1) And the essence of the [eucharistic] sacrament is exactly that in it the invisible is touched in the visible, that the touchable visible opens the door unto God Himself. The Church, we said, is a communion, a communion of people who, through the action of the Holy Ghost, form the People of God that is, at the same time, the Body of Christ. (…) While 'People of God' expresses the continuity in the history of the Church, 'Body of Christ' expresses the universality established on the Cross and in the resurrection of the Lord. For us Christians, therefore, Body of Christ is not only an image, but a true concept, because in it Christ gives us the gift of his real Body and not only of an image. »»

Father Norbertijn Basiel Vanmaele makes a fine point about the intimate unity of Christ and his Church: [122)]

> «« There on Calvary, Jesus was all alone to offer the Sacrifice, as He was only to be sacrificed. *"I have trodden the winepress alone and from the peoples no one was with Me."* (Is. 63:3) Jesus' Church did not exist then. She would only be born on the Cross. In order to create and sanctify her, Jesus had to die first. (cf. Eph. 5:25-27) It is quite different with regard to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Now Jesus is bound to his Church as the temple rests on the cornerstone (cf. Eph. 2:20-21), as the bridegroom is united to his bride (cf. Eph. 5:23), as the head is one body with the limbs. (cf. Col. 1:18) (…) Now, when today the Holy Mass is celebrated as the sacrifice of Calvary, Jesus is no longer alone. The Church stands faithful at Jesus' side as co-sacrificer and co-sacrifice in the sacrificial Eucharistic life of her Bridegroom. »»

Isn't that a beautiful ending to this chapter that discussed the glorious restoration of Creation and the regaining of our paradisiacal state?

121) Quote of Pope Paul VI: opening address to the Second Session, Sept. 29, 1963.

122) "Hostie met de Hostie" (Host with the Host) by B. Vanmaele (OPraem) - published by the "Sekretariaat van de Eucharistische Kruistocht", Averbode Abbey, Belgium # 2nd edition, 1929.

APPENDIX 14

A New Species, using the Uterus as an Incubator…

by Renza Giacobbi

Note to § 96 of the Genesis Edition (2007) of the writings of Don Guido Bortoluzzi

The HEAD OF THE BRIDGE symbolises the female of whatever species it may be, who, by divine intervention, brings into the world the first couple of a new species. This female is given this name by the Lord because symbolically she can be portrayed as a HEAD OF THE BRIDGE, which lacks the rest of the bridge, a half-arch. So she resembles a trampoline more than a bridge because after the springboard there is a void, that is, the absence of what ought to be the natural result of her genetic patrimony, and instead of it there is the beginning of a different species through the creative work of God who used her uterus as an incubator. In practice: from the HEAD OF THE BRIDGE there comes to light a new, autonomous species which has no chromosomal continuity with the species of the female from whom it is derived. In other words, individuals of the new species have no possibility of being effectively crossed with those of the species from which their species has come, that is, the species that the HEAD OF THE BRIDGE belongs to.

To sum up: from a HEAD OF THE BRIDGE there is a one-way journey, a road with no turning back. This is a general rule how God creates any new kind. The BRIDGE, on the other hand, indicates in current speech the structure that permits a passage from one bank to the other. In this case, or in the language used by the Lord, it is a female endowed with a number of chromosomes such as to permit a passage in a double direction, that is, the passing of genes from one species to another and vice-versa. This bridge, or the female, which only exceptionally becomes a link between two different species, creates a hybrid population. In this revelation, the BRIDGE is that individual female that has been the origin of a cross between two species, like that of the ancestors and that of the Sons of God. In nature, the phenomenon of a cross between different species is impossible on account of the definition of a species, which presents it as “a group of individuals genetically isolated”, for which cause any relations outside the group are infertile or sterile because between incompatible groups. [A cross can be fertile only if between different groups belonging to the same species. For example, one can make crosses between different breeds of dogs, but a cross between a dog and a cat is normally impossible, as is a cross between a human and a monkey, a so-called humanzee.]

Hence, in this revelation [by Don Guido] we find ourselves faced with an exceptional feminine individual, called HEAD OF THE BRIDGE, who in an isolated event takes on the role of BRIDGE because exceptionally endowed with the potentiality of being compatible, through the number and nature of her chromosomes, with individuals of the two different species [with the new Man as well as with her own ancestors] and, therefore, of being able to be fertilised by both of them. This is the reason why this symbol which here is named the BRIDGE is used as an appellation of that female individual who gives and will give, as

we shall see later, birth to a hybrid species. Because of this Don Guido concluded that only said female must have had necessarily 47 chromosomes, to be able to be an intermediate passage from the ancestor's species and the species of the Children of God. In fact, as we shall see later, this female could get babies both from ancestors having 48 chromosomes, and from the Man having 46 chromosomes. [In 1959, the French physician Jérôme Lejeune identified Down syndrome as a chromosomal condition. Instead of the usual 46 chromosomes present in each cell, Lejeune observed 47 in the cells of individuals with Down syndrome.] *)

This interfertile female was a unique exception wanted by the Lord, more similar to a woman then her sisters probably in order to give to the first Man a nurse more intelligent and closer to the characteristics of the human species: a fatherly attention from God. Because of her particular function this female should have been removed from the Man once she had performed her function as a head of bridge in order that the Man would not have a chance to generate hybrids from her in a natural way. But unfortunately it is this that took place because of the disobedience of the Young Man [Adam], since she became in fact a bridge between the two species [instead of only head of the bridge].

*) Chromosome abnormality associated with the clinical syndrome of mongolism can usually be attributed to primary non-disjunction during gametogenesis. Nevertheless, a variety of chromosome abnormalities not attributable to primary non-disjunction during gametogenesis have been described, usually in mongols born to young mothers. The authors of this paper report a 48/46 chromosome mosaicism in a mongol born to a young mother. The cell line with 48 chromosomes has five chromosomes of the 21–22 group (Denver system) and a centric fragment. The cell line with 46 chromosomes has an extra chromosome with the morphology of the 19–20 group and only three chromosomes of the 21–22 group. ("Chromosome Mosaicism in a Mongol born to a Young Mother" by C.E. Blank, P.M. Lord, M.D. Casey and B.M. Laurance of the Genetics Department of the University of Sheffield; in Cytogenetics 2 # 1963 - pp. 76-84).

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APPENDIX 15 – From Maria Valtorta's Notebooks :

"Wherever Man no longer has a living soul, he is the Beastman"

The Creation - Book of Genesis

– A new light on the origins of Man –
From the writings of Don Guido Bortoluzzi (1907-1991)

"I was looking for the truth on some problems about the origins of man, and THE TRUTH ITSELF came to me unexpected, undeserved, clear, overabundant, beautiful, and comforting."

Edited by Renza Giacobbi - Terza Edizione # 2007 – www.genesibiblica.eu. The English book, there available: "The Biblical Genesis - Evolution or Creation (Cain is a clue to mystery)". The English translation is by Father Michael Crowdy.[123)]

With Father Guido, a new period opens in the relationship between humanity and God, a period in which God wishes to be known above all, not to be loved only in the full intention of the heart but also with the complete consent of the mind. (…) In January 1932, during the Spiritual Exercises for those to be ordained priests. Mgr. Gaetano Masi, the seminarists' spiritual director, concluded his exposition with these words: *"And when the Lord deigns to make clear to one of you,"* and he looked directly at the seminarist Guido, *"the mystery of original sin, thank Him, because only through knowledge of the true nature of the original sin will it be possible to understand the mystery and Plan of the Salvation."*[124)] Thus the consciousness of his mission matured slowly in his spirit, in reserve, in modesty and humility, with his heart full of expectation and thankful abandonment, in the serene disposition of accepting the Will of God. (From chapter "The life of Fr. Guido Bortoluzzi")

Don Guido Bortoluzzi

2.24 – How the book came into being

Renza Giacobbi writes: (From "Witness" by Renza Giacobbi)

> «« And so he began to talk to me about his book, telling me that the original sin was a sin of hybridizing of the pure species of the 'Sons of God', who were created perfect as the Bible says, but were immediately afterwards corrupted by a union with the pre-human species [those of the pre-creation]. (…) In the five years that followed, until his death, I was able to pass many hours hearing and rehearing the story of his extraordinary experiences. He would speak in a simple manner, without exaggeration. Even the deepest concepts, coming from him, were easily understandable. An intelligent critic, he knew how to get to the heart of every question, showing at the

same time a surprising analytical ability. He showed interest in everything about him whether in nature or in the human mind. He had a very acutely observant nature: in everyday life he would be struck by even the smallest details that others would pass over. This explains the minuteness of his descriptions of his visions. »»

2.25 – The Calling of Don Guido

In 1922, whilst at the Seminary of Feltre, Don Giovanni Calabria predicted that Guido Bortoluzzi would write an important book. Father Guido recounts:

«« It happened in this way: I was returning with my classmates from the courtyard to the classroom adjoining the Rector's room. He was in front of his door, talking with a visiting priest, whom I did not know. No sooner had we come in, than the Rector

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123) Father Michael Crowdy was born in 1914 of an excellent English family of the Anglican Faith. He became a Roman Catholic after obtaining his degree at university and he then entered the Seminary of the Oratorian Order of St Philip Neri, where he was ordained a Priest. He was called to teach at the Angelicum (College) at Rome because of his great knowledge and his enthusiastic preaching. He taught there for twelve years. While in Rome a young stigmatic man told him that he would bring the "Living Jesus" to England. Touched by such a prediction he went back to England and resumed his former preaching, moving from place to place.

In 2004 a priest friend gave him Fr. Guido's book on Genesis. He was enthusiastic about it and started to translate the 'revelation' into English. I (Renza Giacobbi) came to know him in Belgium when he had finished his translation in September 2006, when he had reached the age of 92 years. We went together on a pilgrimage to Banneux, during which I could witness his deep devotion to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and the Virgin Mary. He looked a very kind but a rather reserved person, rather tall, slender, of a distinguished aspect, courteous, a learned person, he commanded a certain reverence. He spoke fluently and correctly the Italian language. I was impressed by his quick mind, his physical agility and his easy way of moving about. He was able to climb stairs without embarrassment with all his 92 years of age, while I, instead, was finding it hard to follow him, despite the fact that I was 35 years younger.

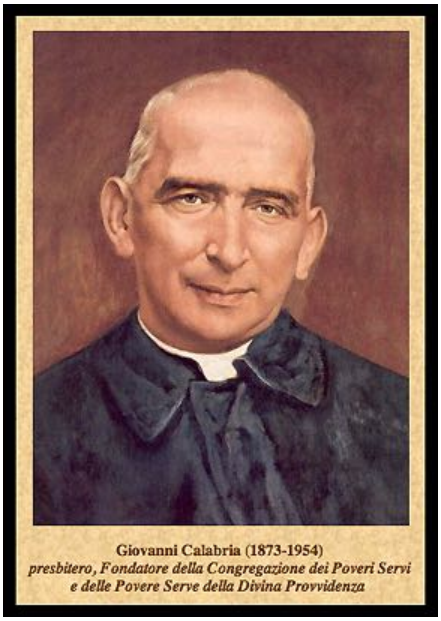
He confidentially told me, not without emotion, that he often asked himself why the Lord allowed him to get so old. Only after discovering this message about creation and ha-ving the chance to translate it, could he understand and give thanks to the Lord. He told me that making this translation was the greatest happening of his life and he felt very honoured by it. When he told me this, I thought that perhaps his translation into English was the subject of that old prediction made to him in Rome. He did not want to accept any economical recompense: he only accepted an invitation to come to Italy the following summer to see the spots where Fr. Guido lived and had the visions of the Lord. But he could not avail himself of such a project, since he died soon after that meeting, at Bristol; it was the 8th December 2006 at the feast of the Immaculate Conception.

124) Sheila E. Mc Ginn – Professor of Biblical Studies & Early Christianity at the John Carroll University in Ohio, USA – has made a summary of the historical development of the unresolved doctrine of original sin within the Roman Catholic Church. In her paper she concludes that the encyclical Humani Generis, promulgated in 1950, deliberately left open the possibility of polygenisis as an avenue for theological inquiry by stating: "it cannot be seen" or "is in no way apparent how such an opinion can be reconciled", instead of: "is contrary to the faith" or "the Catholic faith obliges us to hold". Section 37 of the encyclical states that polygenisis is not acceptable because it cannot be seen how it could be reconciled with the Church's doctrine on original sin, "which proceeds from a sin truly committed by one Adam and, transmitted to all by generation, is found in, and proper to, each." (See Mc Ginn's Internet article: "The Christian doctrine of Original Sin: a summary of the historical development", updated 19 March 2007)

joined us, leaving the other door open, and told us that that priest was Father Giovanni Calabria, the founder of the house of the Good Children at Verona. He was a charismatic similar to John Bosco, and that, seeing us come in, he said that one of us, in old age, would write a very important book, and that he should write it hastily. Only I, among our group of twelve, asked: *"That one of us, will he know that his book is very important?"* From the passage I heard the voice of Father Calabria: *"Yes, he will know it. It is he, in fact." "On what subject?"* I asked again. *"I shall go and ask him",* answered the Rector. The Rector went out to talk with Father Calabria. When he came back he said that the student concerned would know, and that it concerned the Bible, the biblical Genesis. Then he asked: *"Which of you asked that question?"* I kept silent, fearing I had committed an impertinence. He repeated the question. One of the others spoke my name. There was another in the class with the same name. Someone pointed me out. The Rector looked at me, then looked at the other bearing my same name, who was the brightest in the class. And because Father Calabria had predicted that the other would change course, he said: *"I understand. I know which of the two."* He became the favourite. I, in the Rector's view, was the one who would change course. But the contrary was what actually happened. From then onwards the Rector paid the fees of my 'namesake' from his own pocket. And because Father Calabria had predicted that 'the other' would leave the seminary, the cleric Guido from then on was treated with coldness and indifference. »» (From: "The life of Fr. Guido Bortoluzzi")

Who was Don Giovanni Calabria

Saint Giovanni Calabria (1873-1954) was a prophetic figure and great charismatic from the first half of the 20th century. In 1907 at Verona he founded the House of the Good Children to receive young men in difficulty, and in 1910 he founded the order of the Poor Servants of the Divine Providence, and lastly he organised a hospital and a retirement home. He has been called the "Prophet of the Face of the Father", on account of his total trust in and abandonment to God as the Good Father. His work was totally entrusted to the Divine Providence, putting into practice the teachings of the Gospel. He held it to be very urgent to spread the Gospel all over the world, to affirm the primacy of the Kingdom of Christ and to defend the religious and cultural patrimony of the Church. He was a very productive person for the Church and was canonised in 1999.



Giovanni Calabria (1873-1954)
presbitero, Fondatore della Congregazione dei Poveri Servi e delle Povere Serve della Divina Provvidenza

2.26 – The revelations take time

On 2 February 1932 Bortoluzzi celebrated his first Mass. This date was remembered by him in the years to come as the most important of his life, and he felt strong emotion on every anniversary of it. Father Guido was immediately sent as priest-in-charge of Fusine,

a hamlet of Zoldo Alto in the Belluno province, where he stayed until 1934. Afterwards he was appointed Parish Priest at Dont, a hamlet in the Forno di Zoldo, a few kilometres from his previous post. He stayed there 10 years, giving himself entirely to his parishioners and also to the restoration of the church, which urgently needed a new roof and other repairs. (…) In 1945 he was sent as parish priest to Casso, a village lying above the Vajont Dam, on the border between the province of Belluno and that of Pordenone. (…) a poor, very poor place, where they kept boars instead of pigs, where the houses were not plastered. Sometimes families of two or three generations lived in one room. It could happen that girls of twelve gave birth, sometimes the fruit of incest. In this kind of situation Father Guido had much [missionary] work to do, and obviously he met opposition. His frankness in the pulpit earned him not a few enemies. There were many attempts upon his life, but none succeeded. (…) Having left Casso back in 1953, he retired for two years to be near his old and invalid mother who lived in Farra d'Alpago on the border of the lake of Santa Croce. She had been alone since Giulio, her other son, had married. (…) In 1955 he was sent as parish priest to Chies d'Alpago, another little village in Belluno, high up and at the extremity of the beautiful amphitheatre of Alpago Valley, and at the foot of it there was Farra. His mother became steadily older and more unwell. She was to die in 1970, in January. Often, in fine weather, he went down to see her by bicycle or bus. He never had any other means of transport, nor did he have a housekeeper.

Father Guido remained parish priest of Chies d'Alpago for over twenty years, until 1976. (…) Meanwhile, there began to grow in him the conviction that in the eyes of the Lord he was not unworthy, since time had passed and the prediction received in his youth had yet to be realized. But the Lord's times are not ours… And so, unexpectedly, when countless mortifications had tempered his soul and his faith, the Lord kept his appointment. The eight revelations, he finally received, took place between 1968 and 1974. It was during his time in Chies that Father Guido had practically all his revelations, whether in the form of interior locutions or of prophetic dreams, or of visions seen awake. Only the revelations on the original sin came to him in his paternal home at Farra d'Alpago. (Both sections from "The life of Fr. Guido Bortoluzzi")

In these revelations the Lord uses a truly original method, for He wishes reason to play its part as well as the heart. Moments of pause allowed for reflection, so that deductions and even objections could be made. It is clear that God wants man to have explanations that satisfy his science as well as his faith. It is a way of speaking that presupposes humankind has matured, is adult and anxious to be given reasons, even in the supernatural field and in faith. Father Guido sees that these revelations are the answer to his well-founded demands. Rather, he sees that his queries and his need of truth, which is legitimate for any man, are inspired by God Himself who wills us to be conscious and convinced sharers in his plan of Salvation. The Lord uses a language that is incisive, clear and unambiguous to serve His purpose of giving light on the obscure points of the first chapters of the book Genesis. Although at the start Father Guido put up some resistance to the revelations, in view of the teachings he had received in the Seminary, the Lord lovingly and patiently reassured him and led him to understand that all that he saw and heard [in the revelations] did not con-

tradict Holy Scripture, but gives the explanation of what in Genesis is described in a symbolic language. (From: The Introductory Explanation)

2.27 – The essential message

Theology teaches that He who makes all things 'good', made the first human couple 'very good', and not in the manner of a bestial state from which they evolved, during the passage of millennia, amid unheard-of sufferings. 'Man', then, [Adam], could not have been the product of evolution because in that case humanity would not have been 'very good' in its original state. It is clear that if the Man created by God was a perfect creature, while archaeological finds show that the man of prehistory was an imperfect creature, it was original sin that corrupted him in all his aspects, to the point of producing in him characteristics of hominids [like Cain was shown to Father Guido]. And, if he was corrupted in his physical and psychic components, and not only spiritually, it is logical to think that the original sin was one of crossbreeding due to a [certain forbidden] relationship consummated outside the [Adamitic] species. If the two progenitors were obliged to increase and multiply (Gen. 1:28), exclusive relations between them could not have been prohibited, but were necessarily dutiful. (§ 3) (See also the description under 31A of our article.)

Why is it that scientists take for granted the theory of polygenesis [multiple origins], while the Bible tells us of only one Man and of a single human couple at the beginning, and have not considered the hypothesis that the difference between racial groups and certain hereditary taints, could be due to a cross-breeding of the human race at the beginning of its existence with the anthropomorphic species nearest to Man? (§ 4)

A remarkable example of hybridisation is noted in Genesis 6 where, in the genealogical Tree of Life the race of the *"Sons of God"* was forbidden to know, that is, to have sexual relations with [the offspring of] the wild genealogical tree. That chapter speaks of the [continued and] ill-starred unions – by which both species corrupted [ever more] – between the "Sons of God" and the *"daughters of men"*, or the Perfect Men and the daughters of hybrid men, [from whom also because of the intervention of the fallen angels the terrible giants resulted, of which Goliath was a specimen]. As though the Biblical account was a fable, the learned men have chosen to neglect it and let their imaginations run wild

over fossil finds which only serve to prove that men had lost the image and likeness of God. What scientists and theologians call evolution has in reality been a re-evolution [or reconstructive development], a recovery of humanity towards the original human characteristics operated by means of selection guided by the Creator [the supreme phylum leaves its mark]: only in this case can one correctly speak of guided re-evolution [the creation of the first human couple, known as Adam and Eve, has nothing to do with it]. (§ 4)

Don Guido writes in a note:

> «« On the 8th June 1972, I was present in the Great Hall of the Seminary at a lecture on genetic microbiology relative to hereditary defects that condition human behaviour. Professor Giambattista Marson, head of the department of dermatology at the Belluno Hospital, was explaining how in America examination of the body cells of those condemned to life sentences revealed that some of them, instead of having the normal XY chromosomes, had, in addition, a smaller one, a Y. On account of which the scientists wondered how that "Y" had entered the human genetic patrimony, making unbalanced any person who was in possession of one. I then intervened, saying: *"We are believers, and for us it is quite certain that He who has guided the evolution of living creatures up to the summits of the phylum, has put into being a human creature that was perfect and intended to be the champion for all his descendants. If today there are found cases of ancestral peculiarities, that is due to the fact that the champion, who in Earthly Paradise goes under the name of the genealogical 'Tree of Life', had progenitive relations with the 'Wild Tree', which could have produced good fruit with God's intervention and would produce bad fruit without it: that is, hybrids, bastards…"* I could not continue because a senior professor of Biblical exegesis, Father Angelo Santin, interrupted me, saying: *"We are not prepared for this line!"* »» (Note to § 28)

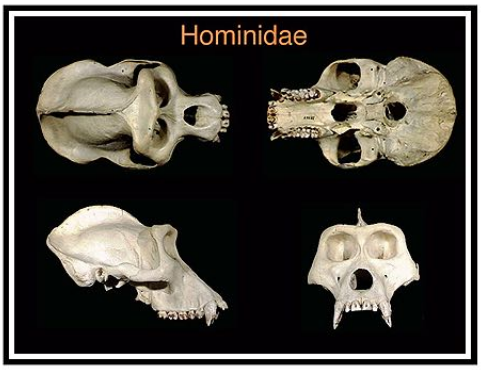
[During a locution] there followed another eight or ten words that Father Guido did not remember, but which referred to God's work of guiding humanity, made bestial because of crossbreeding. God's [secular] work aims at the recovery of humankind to the original image [of the first Man], not foremost in regard to bodily characteristics that have little importance, but rather to his intellectual powers and the power to will. (…) I understood the notion of RESURRECTION in its full sense as something by which Christ effected a recovery of humankind not only spiritual but also in its psychophysical constitution. He is the Author of the physical and psycho-intellectual re-evolution of humankind. RESURRECTION, then, must be understood as the recovery of the original image [the restoration of the paradisiacal state] according to the model that served to make the Exemplar. He was the prototype, the first Man [in the idealistic meaning of the word]. Hence, its re-evolution, regeneration, rehabilitation, also physical, have been effected and guided by God. We are beings also physically reborn [in a work yet to be externalized]. (§ 30-31)

The Gospel of John teaches that through Christ all men have been given the possibility, or - better - the opportunity, to become children of God (dedit eos potestatem filios Dei fieri), and with that they have eternal life in communion with Him. It does not say that God gave eternal Life to all. John writes in his Gospel that Jesus said: *"I pray for many"* (oro pro multis); He did not say: "I pray for all" (oro pro omnibus). Those 'many' are all men of

good will - to whatever creed they belong - who respond to the Love of God in good faith. For if all have a like possibility of becoming the adopted Sons of God, only those become Sons of God who draw fruit from the gifts of Redemption. The others, those who do not follow the principles of the Gospel, remain creatures of God, that is, inferior beings like the animals, although intelligent: inferiors among the inferiors. They remain excluded [from the promises]. God does not punish, God promotes or does not promote. Non-promotion is indeed a punishment, but does not come from God. (§ 32)

2.28 – Our ancestors of the Wild Tree

I saw that it was a male [of the wild species]. This was evident not only by the genital organs, but also by the shape of the erect ears and by the swelling of the chest, which was higher up than in the females. It was a massive figure, black and hairy, with very large erect ears reaching beyond the height of the cranium by about ten or twelve centimetres. The cranium was of a depressed shape, hence the low forehead. The bony arch above the eyebrows was more or less vertical and not prominent. The eye was on the edge of the eyebrow. There was no nose, only a black nasal opening uncovered. The mouth, with black lips, opened back to the root of the jaws. The facial angle was upright. The mandible lacked a chin. The black, thick and tangled hair that covered his whole body was like that which formed his beard, which left uncovered only the skin around the eye-sockets and the forehead. The hair was black, dry, smooth and matt, descending about the eyes. The shoulders broad, the pelvis narrow, long forearms, short legs. In the vision it was looking ahead, motionless. Probably his attention was directed at the Boy [Adam]. On the right of the male, the four young pregnant females and the old mother made a line. They all had ears projecting from their hair and quivering at every movement of their bodies. First among the females, on the male's right, was that hairless female like a woman, though ugly and badly proportioned, whom I did not want to look at because she was naked. She was about five centimetres shorter than the male. On her right there was a second female, black and hairy of the same height, but of a thinner physique, lanky. Then a third female like the last, but a little shorter. Then the fourth female, the smallest, who was gazing into the distance beyond the group and repeatedly opened her mouth, putting out her long pointed tongue, a necessary condition for using the voice, a sign that the tongue, when relaxed, obstructed the space between the vocal cords. (…) When the females opened their mouths I could see their healthy teeth, with four canines a little longer than the others. Their hair, which was smooth but not glossy, was black but not intensely black as was the Boy's. It seemed slightly faded by the sun. The hair that covered all their bodies was just like that which some adult males have on their chests nowadays, and which all have at the base of their upper and lower limbs. Their hands were long, black and very thin. The thumb was distant from the index finger,



as though its exposed part came out at the level of the wrist. The nails were narrow, long, arched and firm. From the sum of all these characteristics I understood that these beings, more intelligent from their expression than dogs, and, more effective for service than any other animal, were predisposed by the Creator to be the helpers of Man, especially in agricultural tasks such as rice-planting, the sowing and harvesting of roots, etcetera. They did not have the delicate skin that is scratched by contact with the earth. They did not need to stoop for work as we do, because of their short legs and long arms. (§ 57-60)

At first I had not understood [in the vision] the meaning of TREES, but from the explanation received afterwards I understood that they were the image of genealogical trees, thus indicating the two species: the Tree of Life, that of the [elevated] human species, represented by the Boy [Adam] – who had just left the scene – and the Wild Tree of the species of those singular animals [of the pre-creation]. I now also understood the meaning of ONE, or UNIQUE. The Lord, just as he affirmed the monogenesis of the human species, when He indicated Adam as the PROGENITOR OF ALL MEN, so likewise did He affirm the monogenesis [no mixing] of that wild tree. Thus, if for the human race the Progenitor [Adam] would have been the only one from whom Man derived, and likewise for the descendants of the wild genealogical tree, each unique in its own kind, the Lord, consequently, affirmed the genesis of the hybrid tree – that I had observed in an earlier revelation – which was the fruit of the crossing of those two pure species [and from whom all humankind derives via Noah, who himself admittedly was pure, but the wives he took in the Ark were not]. (§ 46)

I understood that if the species of these ancestors no longer exist in their original state, it is because they now live fused into the [Adamitic] Man. They had characteristics that are very different from those that the so-called hominids (or hominidae), the prehistoric men,

are shown as having [artistic impressions based on discovered skeletons]. These, on the way to re-evolution, are commonly called hominids (or anthropoids), but these terms are equivocal because they also include the pongos, that is to say, the greater, tailless apes like the orang-utan, the chimpanzee and the gorilla. The ancestors are the individuals belonging to this unique species, now extinct, from which God drew one female predisposed for the development of the embryo of the Man created by God. (§ 47 and its note)

2.29 – Of every tree you may freely eat, except for the one in the middle[125)]

In chapter 31 of the Book of Ezekiel we find a perfect example of trees being compared to people.[126)] In the abridged form we read:

> «« Now it came to pass that the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, speak unto Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his multitude: *"Whom are you like in your greatness? Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar (**a tree**) in Lebanon with fine branches. The waters made it great, underground waters gave it height with her rivers running around the place where it was planted, and sent out rivulets to all the trees (**people**) of the field. Therefore its height was exalted above all the trees (**people**) of the field. Under its shadow dwelt all great nations (**countries**)."*
>
> (Now we change subject and **we go to the Garden of Eden, Paradise.**) The cedars (**people**) in the Garden of God could not hide it: the fir trees (**people**) were not like his (**Adam's**) boughs. (**See the comparison: thus we know that there were other people around, those of the pre-creation, to be compared with the Man/Adam**), and even the chestnut trees (**the other coloured races**) were not like his boughs (**Adam's children**), nor any tree in the Garden of God was like unto him in his beauty. I have made him resplendent by the multitude of his branches: so that all the trees (**people**) of Eden; that were in the Garden of God, envied him. (**This shows that the trees in the Garden were people of different races, not different species, yet could not rival the splendour of the newly created race.**) Therefore thus saith the Lord God: Because thou hast lifted up thyself in height, and he hath shot up his top among the thick boughs, and his heart (**trees do not have hearts**) lifted up in his height, I have therefore delivered him (**Now God is speaking of Adam.)** into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen. He has dealt with him. I have driven him out for his wickedness. (**Driven Adam out of the Garden of Eden, because of his transgression**.) And strangers (**people of other races**), the most terrible of the nations, have cut him off and have left him (**What a pitiful destiny!**): upon the mountains and in all the valleys his branches are fallen by all the rivers of the land and all the people of the earth are gone down from his shadow, and have left him. (**Here the scattering of all races across the earth is meant. The races were segregated, but as the Book of Genesis states: Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat – have sexual intercourse with – except with that particular one in the middle.**) On its ruin shall all the fowls of the heaven remain, and all the beasts of the field wil come to its branches. (**Here God is saying that Adam's children would always carry the burden of degeneration, because Adam had mixed with**

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125) This and next chapter are not from the writings of Don Guido and Renza Giacobbi.
126) Some other places in Scriptures where men are described as trees, are: Deut. 28:42; Judg. 9:8-15; 1 Chron. 16:33; Ps. 96:12; Is. 10:18; 14:8; 55:12; 61:3; Ez. 17:22-24; Zech. 4:3, 11-14 (cf. Rev. 11:3-4); Mt. 3:10; Luke 3:9; 21:29; Jude 12.

that tree in the middle.) To the end that none of all the trees by the waters exalt themselves for their height, for they were all delivered unto death to the depths of the earth, in the midst of the children of men, with them that went down to the pit (**grave**). (**All mankind will die because of Adam's sin**.) Thus saith the Lord God: In the day when he (**Adam**) went down to the Pit (**grave**) I caused a deep mourning. I caused Lebanon to mourn for him, and all the trees (**people**) of the field fainted because of it. (**Here again, trees do not faint, only people**.) I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall. (**When Adam fell all the various races and nations on earth watched and shook with fear and sadness.**), when I cast him down to Hell (**the grave**) with them that descended into the Pit. All the trees of Eden (**people**), the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, shall one day be comforted in the depths of the earth. (**Because of the redemptive power of Jesus suffering on the Cross.**) »»

Genesis 6:9 says that Noah was perfect (tamiem), something that can also be translated by 'immaculate'. Here it means that Noah's blood was not contaminated by the descendants of the 'wild tree'. There may also have been a mingling with the people of the pre-creation, who nevertheless stood at a lower level (only Adam was the omega). Indeed, that was permitted, according to Don Guido. But Noah was not the only one to survive the Flood. There were the four women who accompanied Noah and his three sons into the Ark. Of them the Bible does not say that they were immaculate and thus their descendants were not 'immaculate'. The various great races came forth from him and these women, perhaps from separations such as occurred at the birth of the twins Jacob and Esau, who in no way resembled one another. According to the Bible they were to grow into two separate peoples, even though they came from the same father and mother. (Gen. 25:23) [127)]

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127) Another possibility to explain the different races, consists in that Noah did not exclusively built a boat, but also utilized vast elevations on the different continents, which during the global Deluge served as natural refuges for man and animal. In contrast to the Middle East crescent, some terrains elsewhere were sufficiently elevated (The Ararat, where the Arch has been found, may have risen even more afterwards because of the raising mountain mass.) A number of those enclosed encampments have been discovered by the American Alan D. Moen by means of satellite pictures. He demonstrates his theory by means of additonal evidence in his publication from 2007: "Noah's Ark – Discovering the Science of Man's Oldest Mystery". This approach seems to contradict the Bible, which states that all people, except Noah's family, perished in the Deluge. (Gen. 7:21) However, the Bible is the book of history of the families of Adam, the first MAN in the idealistic sense of the word. If it states that all people perished, this does not implicate that also all pre-Adamitic generations died, the more so, because the word 'all' in Hebrew must not be taken as it would in our modern languages. In Hebrew it just means 'all of those', whatever 'those' means in the particular case.

Summary of the book of Alan Moen: In 1804 blonde-haired, blue-eyed Mandan Indians were found living at the Geographical Center of North America by the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Blonde-haired mummies have been discovered in Urumqi, China, the Geogra-phical Center of Asia. At the Geographical Center of Australia over 90% of the children of the aboriginals are born with blonde hair. If that was not amazing enough, recent satellite imagery has revealed raised arcs of land at each of these locations. The possibility that Noah's people built these raised arcs (arks) of land as refuge from the imminent Flood is explored in Moen's book in detail, with more arcs of land found with similar characteristics in other places of the world.

Does our conclusion not conflict with Acts 17:24-26? There Paul speaks to the assembled people on the Areopagus: *"God that made the world and all things therein (...)* ***has made of one blood all nations of men*** *for to dwell on all the face of the earth."* The solution is found in the nature of the Bible. Most students of religion are not aware that the Bible almost exclusively deals with the Adamic generation and their offspring, and that it mainly ignores the rest. It is the book of the generations of Adam. The primary focus of the Book of Acts is on Israel, from the beginning – when the disciples ask Jesus if the kingdom is to be restored to Israel in this time, to the end – when God's verdict is declared that Israel is 'not' going to be converted and that salvation is henceforth to be found in the Gentiles. In short, the Book of Acts is about Israel, who are being called, and it tells of their rejection of that calling. And the people of Israel are, of course, the sons of Adam, via Heber and Abraham. The Gentiles are another matter. God's Will for the church of the Gentiles is revealed in a far greater and more splendid light in Paul's epistles, written after Acts, according to the promise: *"That you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with al the saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height — to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge that you may be filled with all the fullness of God."* (Eph. 3:17-19)

The Book of the Acts belongs to the historical narratives of the people of Israel, like Ezra and Nehemiah and Chronicles, and is therefore at a fundamentally different level than that of the Epistles and the prophetic Book of Revelations. The statement that the entire human [Adamic] race is made of *"one blood"* simply belongs to the generally accepted Jewish tradition and underlines the purpose of the Bible itself, but it does not stop there, for Christ's redemptive sacrifice was made for the Gentiles as well. This statement is not, therefore, a priori contrary to the treasury of belief and thus not against the teachings of Don Guido.

2.30 – Critical remarks

In the Bible and in Don Guido's writings there is no mention of the primary ovule (which gave rise to Adam) in the usual meaning of the word. Adam (Ish) the Man was created (bar) not made (asa). Conventional genetics does not apply here to explain the stage between the creature of pre-creation (the wild shoot) and Man. The greatest problem in the study of the fossil archive is the absence of intermediate forms, which ought to be present in great numbers, if indeed there is question of a gradual evolution. On the contrary, it is an explosion of evolutionary drift on the threshold of each geological era. Now, thanks to Don Guido, we know how God achieved this each time, as He did with Ish (the Man). In § 94 of the book, Don Guido writes:

> «« What is important to see is that to give origin to the first Man [Adam] God created both the male and female gametes, but later to create the first Woman He created only the ovule in the ancestor-mother's womb [of the wild species], since the spermatozoa was made available by the Young Man. We may remember that the Almighty God made Adam fall into a deep sleep, as says the Mosaic Genesis, so that he may not remember what happened with that female, in order not to repeat that union any more [which he did nonetheless]. »»

I find it difficult to agree with this view, basing my argument on the general principle that God never intervenes unless necessary, and if He does intervene He does that in so far as possible within the bounds of already existing possibilities. Indeed, God always operates in an efficient manner. For the creation of Isha (the Woman) God already had the basic material available in Ish in order to create the ovule. The ovule is the sexual cell (or gamete) usually produced by the woman. Like all gametes, the ovule contains no more than half of the chromosomes and requires fertilisation in order to develop fully.

There is a simpler way than that proposed by Don Guido, who conceived the creation of Isha's ovule 'ex nihilo' (out of nothing). I base my argument here on the explanation by Fernand Crombette (1880-1970), as found in "The Revelation of the Revelation".[128)] This work is a translation obtained by the reading of the Hebrew with the aid of the ancient monosyllabic Coptic, the original language of ancient Egypt. It fits very harmoniously using this idiom, as if Genesis had been written in Coptic. It was not only at the end of his work but also close to the end of his life that this learned man applied his method of reading to the beginning of the Book of Genesis. The enrichment thus brought about, without contradicting the version that the Church has transmitted to us, is a useful tool for obtaining a deeper understanding of the sacred text.

The Genesis 2:21 verse that concerns us: *"And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and when he slept He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place."* The coordinated text that follows from using ancient Coptic: *"Once the first period had gone by, Djehoouôh Ehèlohidjm allowed a deep sleep to come over Adam. (You must know that) God had, some time ago, separated out a shaped layer by an extra supplement of the Word. This layer was now, during Adam's sleep, removed after it had formed itself into a type that copied more than half of the genetic patrimony."* [129)] Crombette's comments: "*Here we learn that God caused the flesh of one of Adam's buttocks to proliferate and that when the excrescence was ripe, he excised it."* That excrescence could very well have been an ovule, agreeing with the Hebrew word for 'rib', which can also mean 'ovule'.[130)] **My conclusion is that this special ovule was then implanted in the woman of the wild kind in order to be later fertilized by Adam. And from that, Isha came forth.**

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128) "Extraits de La Révélation de la Révélation - Tome 1", by Fernand Crombette - CESHE, Dinant, Belgium # 2nd edition 2003 (p. 364).

129) The original French is as follows: « Le premier temps passé, Djehoouôh Ehèlo-hidjm fit arriver à Adam un grand et lourd sommeil; dans les temps écoulés, Il avait disjoint en supplément de la Parole une forme-souche; en outre, Il produisit à la partie postérieure de la cuisse d'Adam une excroissance qu'Il sépara et mit un certain temps à faire travailler par la forme jusq'à ce que l'avorton arrivât à reproduire le type avec une seule des parties génitales. »

130) The Hebrew 'tsela' that is usually translated with rib, can be translated with curved (or oval), according to the Strong's Dictionary (6760, 6763), from which we may deduce that tsela can mean 'ovule'. Ovule is from the Latin 'ovum' for egg, from which our word oval has been derived. The translation ovule for tsela is unusual, but is permitted in Hebrew because the 'by God given' Hebrew language, contrary to all other languages, first departs from an abstract or spiritual concept to arrive at a concrete application, which is also the basis for Biblical allegory. And thus tsela in its meaning of 'oval' is not derived from 'rib' that has a curved form, but the meaning 'rib' has been derived from the abstract concept of 'curved'. And therefore tsela can be translated with ovule.

This indicates as well the general mechanism for the origin of the species, for Don Guido says, inspired by God, that when Adam high-handedly produced his own (hybrid) offspring in the female who was only destined to function as an incubator, this was *"an unprecedented event in the history of the Universe"*. We have now learned the way for new species to arise, at least for the highest life forms! It is indisputable that in the geological strata, even if not yet correctly delineated, an ascending complexity of life forms can be observed. First of all, we notice that there is no gradual development of species because intermediate forms are absent. The sudden way in which whole groups of new life forms emerge, as in the 'Cambrian explosion', how could it be otherwise than via a predetermined trajectory? Based on the assumption that God leaves nothing to chance, this trajectory implies that organisms adapt to their environment by means of pre-organizational forms. A speculative solution, inspired by M. Villagrassa (2004), looks like this:

> The hitherto undiscovered command and information center for the identification of species could be at the end of a particular chromosome through some sort of intragenomic program book. This book, that can be read by the soul, has all the information corresponding to every potential biotope (living conditions), already existing or not yet existing. Responding to the conditions of a new biotope, which has seen many changes during the long history of the Earth's geology, this center indicates the possible development of new species – but also some adaptations within the species itself.

Obviously, a fly cannot produce an elephant although it has the blueprint for it. Under the pressure of ever-changing biotopes, increasingly profilerating organisms are thus created that are 'available from stock', in such a way that each time only one is chosen from a restricted range of possibilities. If it represents a major step for the species, a new species will emerge (again with males and females), which will have become genetically incompatible with its predecessor and is on a higher organizational plane. The foregoing means that the adaptations themselves are not left to chance, only the choice of the species, within the proposed criteria of the biotope. There remains a freedom of choice from a limited number of pre-created possibilities, the pre-organizational forms, so that an identical biotope in seperate places can give rise to different life forms.

Pre-programming within the electronic orbits could yield the coding for an unimaginable number of life forms. Thus this program book would always have been carried by every life in every cell. It should be noted that the electron orbital velocity is so fast that in less than two seconds or even one second, an unimaginable number of species can be pre-programmed, truly unimaginable because the human genome already consists of a number of data equal to 35 million hours of high-definition film, and that is just one genome. If we define each quartile of the orbit of the electron (it jumps, no continuous movement) as one of the four letters that write the genetic code, this would be a way of encompassing all available life forms as from the moment of creation, when all past and future moments, or universes, where brought to light in a blitz.

My solution of the ovule (rib) in the side of the first male of the new species solves the problem of the genderousity of the higher species. This is different for the more primitive ones. There are jellyfish that are male first, then bisexual and later female in gender. A large group of microorganisms, called the prokaryotes (without a cell nucleus), can only reproduce asexually. Bacteria and archaea mainly reproduce by binary division. This means that they simply divide into two identical cells. Bacteria cannot reproduce sexually, but they can exchange genetic information with each other. By means of a pilus, two bacteria make contact with each other and exchange genetic material. This is called conjugation. Some bacteria also simply absorb DNA that floats around in their environment to enrich their chromosome. By exchanging genetic material, bacteria can quickly adapt to a new environment. This makes them survive under new conditions. But for the higher species there is always genderousity.

As far as adaptations within the species are concerned, the genome gives a predisposition to adapt via existing genetics to altered living conditions in a process that falls under the heading of epigenetics. Any pig that breaks out of a farm can revert back in a matter of months to a state where it can exist in the wild; it gets hairy, grow tusks and becomes aggressive – but the genome remains identical. But there are also striking changes that are inexplicable within the current theory and take longer to manifest, perhaps a few generations, and then we come to the field of pre-programming as a possible alternative explanation. Quite interestingly, prehistoric human skeletons have been found in Alaska, where the shoulder bone had a different attachment for tendons, with must have made it easier to paddle. Don Guido hypothesized that for the offspring of the hybrid Cain, outwardly very similar to an animal, that it would have taken millions of years to return to the appearance and anatomy of modern man. Because of the genomic predisposition and tendency of species evolution to ascend to a higher stage of development (which can be ascertained in the genesis of species over billions of years), it is reasonable to assume that a hybrid, which has the epigenetic potential to move in both directions, will, in a number of generations, tend to revert to its original higher non-hybrid state, in the case we are dealing with to the original 'human'. If true, it may have taken far fewer generations than postulated by Don Guido, to become outwardly human again. If so, the Biblical chronology might be correct after all, implicating that Adam was created by God in the year 11,205 before Christ.[131)] When Don Guido was alive, the concept of epigenetics was still unknown and so he thought that it would take much longer. Though humankind may now have recovered outwardly; the mind is a different matter and that legacy is still pestering us. And therefore we cannot do without Christ's work of redemption.

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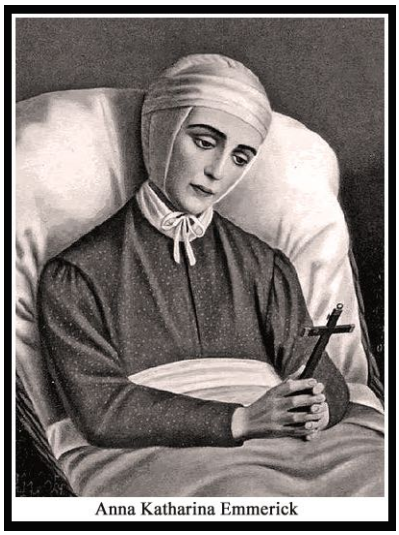
131) As explained in my article "Latest discoveries regarding the Biblical Deluge" the date of birth of Adam needs to be corrected by two grand cycles as defined in Genesis 11:10, where it says that Arphaxad was born two cycles after the Flood —שְׁנָתַיִם אַחַר 'shenathayim achar'. Since a grand cycle counts 60x60=3600 seconds (the short cycle is 6x60=360), and since we are counting, Adam's date of birth is corrected backwards in time to (4005 + 7200) BC, equal to 11,205 BC. According to Panin's Bible chronology the Flood itself struck 1656 years later, and thus appears to have happened in the year 9549 BC, which, as modern research has shown, fits within the window of opportunites.

According to our approach, I would not be surprised that some harmful mutations as a result of cosmic radiation or other means, recover ‘spontaniously’. We should at least keep an open mind as to its posssibility. Remissions are also possible, which might be the case with the poorly understood condition, called congenital hypertrichosis, which causes as from birth an abnormal amount of hair totally covering the face and the body, of which very few cases are known. Often this condition is passed hereditary to only some of the children. The normal children born to such a parent will be normal in all respects, even as regards teeth. (See under Wikipedia: Julia Pastrana)

While genetic engineering of the higher species, including food crops, is ethically reprehensible, they could be self-healing if spread in the wild. At least, I hope so. It’s quite obvious that these kind of foods are not wholesome, because all that lives is attuned to each other as God made his creation ‘very good’, especially when we realize that all possible life forms have already been created potentially ‘from the beginning’. Remember, God leaves nothing to chance. To tinker with genetics is ‘lèse majesty’. Breeding or preservation of the species through selection is of course permitted, a thing that also occurs through the mating ritual in the animal kingdom.


Anna Katharina Emmerick

Now back to the creation of Adam and Eve to the summits of the phylum. According to the visions of the Blessed Anna Katharina Emmerick (1774-1824), an Augustinian nun, it seems as though God later created a second ovule. She named it *“the Blessing”*, which was visible to her in the thigh as a kind of bean and was passed on from generation to generation in a kind of hybernatic state, finally to function as basic material for the birth of Mary, the future mother of God. The sin committed by Ham, Noah’s son, was that he wished to see the ovule on Noah’s thigh. This ovule constituted the essence of the patriarchal blessing to the first-born and thus could only be passed on once. The patriarchs were slow, which meant that it was only passed on once they had become almost blind and deaf and their life had little meaning then. Jacob’s struggle with the angel was about the ovule, so that since then Jacob limped from the hip because of the ‘bean’. Finally it ended up in the Ark of the Covenant, whose function it was to guard the ovule throughout the centuries. In the end it was planted in Anne, the mother of Mary, and that explains the physical fact of why Mary was without original sin. There is also the facet of the inclination towards evil, in which Mary was also without original sin. Different factors played a role, not entirely separate from the ovule. The character of ancestors and progeny is also stored in the germ of life of the ordinary person, and not just on the basis of classical genetics, which uses only mechanical premises.

The purity of the Davidic lineage was the number-one priority under the Old Testament with only one goal: the restoration of the paradisiacal state – which in the end was crow-

ned in the couple Jesus and Mary as a prelude to the restored humanity, which is known in the Book of Acts as the *"the restoration of all things"* (Acts 3:21) (apokatastasis panton / ἀποκαταστάσεως), and that, amazingly, is going to happen in the twinkling of an eye. (1 Cor. 15:52) The theosis (making divine) involves four types of restoration: of individuals, nature, the sinful powers of the soul, as well as the restoration of the hut of David. The latter means that during the Reign of Peace Israel will be primus inter paris among the nations, bearing a higher status and various additional powers while still being equal to those others in important respects.

In Amos 9:11 the Prophet speaks of the restoration of the hut of David fallen down. During the journey through the desert, the Glory of God was present in a tent, together with the Ark, where only Moses was allowed to enter, surmounted by a pillar of fire rising to heaven and by this token his prayer broke unhindered through the earthly veil. David, also, built a tent or hut (sukkoth) containing the Ark of the Covenant (1 Chron. 15:1), with in it the Ten Commandments as well as the pristine ovule from which the Mother of God was to be born. In that hut too no separation between Man and God – as a foreshadowing of God's purpose to give everyone free access to his Glory again.

Thanks to Don Guido Bortoluzzi we know that the original sin from Genesis 3 did not exactly happen as told, notwithstanding the true nature of the original sin. And thus the question arises how to understand Paradise from Genesis 2, that was granted by God. In the first chapter we find the creation of heavens and earth from an earthly and schematic point of view. In the second chapter the attention is directed towards God, schematic as well, who plants a Garden of Delight *"eastward",* or, following the usual Jewish rendering, *"from aforetime",* which in this way represents a reflection of what lives in God Himself, who really cares about Man, the crown of creation. *"My delights were to be with the children of men"* (Deliciae Meae esse cum filiis hominum) says Proverbs 8:31. The Paradise of God, so to say, is the heart of man, says Alphonsus de Liguori in his Ascetical Works. In its original state, Man's heart was also God's Heart, and we known that the Covenant Ark is a representation of God's Heart. Paradise lost turns out to be a loss of God's Heart that has been denied access to. And there, in the reflection of God's Heart, Adam was brought in, at a point in time, Adam, meaning in Hebrew human. And Man will once again be brought in, in this protected guarden of delight! And what appears: from all that is told of this intimate place, the Name Jehova (yod, hê, vâv, hê) is essential! The NAME appears ten times in chapters 2 as well as in chapter 3, which clearly refers to the Ten Commandments, which implies that whoever lives in God's Heart, stands in the perfect reflection of the Divine Will. His NAME is a kind of architecture of the paradisiacal state, of walking with God. And it is there, within this NAME, that Jesus dwells, known as the Jehoshua (yod, hê, **shin**, vâv, hê), and there Man will be reinstalled in his paradisiacal and deified state!

2.31 - Five quotations from the visions of the Blessed Anna Katharina Emmerick, plus quotations from the books of Jasher and Enoch, related to our subject.

31A. From the Ancient Book of Jasher, referred to in Joshua and 2 Samuel

This is the book of the generations of Man, whom God created upon the earth on the day when the Lord God made heaven and earth.

Published by M. N. NOAH & A. S. GOULD, New York # First edition 1840.

The Talmud identifies the Ancient Book of Jasher with the books of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, known as the upright. Sefer Ha-yashar literally means Book of the Upright. Jasher is the source of Joshua 10:12-13 and 2 Samuel 1:17-27. "The Ancient Book of Jasher" follows the books of Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Deuteronomy and Joshua. There are some events recorded in Jasher that are found in the Talmud, no doubt copied from Jasher, for although we find in the Talmud many parables and fanciful tales, for moral and religious purposes, yet everything that we have in Jasher we find recorded in the Bible, with this difference, that in Jasher the occurrences of the Bible are amplified and detailed at length.

The Hebrew introduction to Jasher tells that when Jerusalem was ransacked during the Great War (66-70 AD), a Roman officer from Spain, by the name of Sidrus, discovered a great many books in a private library, which he brought to what is now called Seville, but then Hispalis. As is written: *"Now, this Book of Jasher was the best and most valuable of all."* From thence it was conveyed to the Jewish College at Cordoba. The printer's preface to the Hebrew edition implicates that when the Jewish persecution started in Spain, after the Moors had been driven out, the book was taken out of the country together with the Jewish fugitives after which its whereabouts remain uncertain. At troubled times for Jews, it was brought to Venice after the installation of a modern printing press there.

The translation made by Mr. Samuel for the 1840 edition was based on a printed Hebrew version of 1625 in Venice and a much later one from Lemberg. The printer's preface shows that it was a painful transcript [or copy of that transcript] based on a very old and almost illegible Hebrew record. The work for printing the Hebrew version started in 1613 by order of the rabbinic consistory at Venice. Important is that it was undertaken with their consent and under their supervision, for they alone had the authority to publish such works from the Hebrew records *"as they deemed authentic".* There is also a Jasher, made known in 1751 and published in 1829, that was purportedly found and translated by Flaccus Alcuinus in the eighth century. But this is obviously a fraud.

CHAPTER 2 from the Ancient Book of Jasher

23. And in the end of days and years, when Zillah became old, the Lord opened her womb. 24. And she conceived and bare a son and she called his name Tubal Cain, saying, after I had withered away have I obtained him from the Almighty God. 25. And she conceived again and bare a daughter, and she called her name Naamah, for she said : after I had withred away have I obtained pleasure and delight.

26. And Lamech was old and advanced in years, and his eyes were dim that he could not see [well], and Tubal Cain, his son, was leading him, and it was one day that Lamech went in to the field and Tubal Cain his son was with him, and whilst they were walking in the field, Cain the son of Adam advanced towards them; for Lamech was very old and could not see much, and Tubal Cain his son was very young. 27. And Tubal Cain told his father to draw his bow, and with the arrows he smote **Cain**, who was yet far off, and he slew him, for he **appeared to them to be an animal**. 28. And the arrows entered Cain's body although he was distant from them, and he fell to the ground and died. 29. And the Lord requited Cain's evil according to his wickedness, which he had done to his brother Abel, according to the word of the Lord which he had spoken. 30. **And it came to pass when Cain had died, that Lamech and Tubal went to see the animal they had slain, and they saw, and behold Cain their forefather was fallen dead upon the earth**. (cf. Gen. 4:23)

31. And Lamech was very much grieved at having done this, and in clapping his hands together he struck his son and caused his death. (cf. Gen. 4:23) 32. And the wives of Lamech heard what Lamech had done, and they sought to kill him. 33. And the wives of Lamech hated him from that day, because he slew Cain and Tubal Cain, and the wives of Lamech separated from him, and would not hearken to him in those days. 34. And Lamech came to his wives, and he pressed them to listen to him about this matter. 35. And he said to his wives Adah and Zillah, hear my voice O wives of Lamech, attend to words, for now you have imagined and said that I slew a man with my wounds, and a child with my stripes for their having done no violence, but surely know that I am old and greyheaded, and that my eyes are heavy through age, and I did this thing unknowingly. 36. And the wives of Lamech listened to him in this matter, and they returned to him adviced to do so by their father Adam, but they bore no children to him from that time on, knowing that God's anger was increasing in those days against the sons of men, to destroy them with the waters of the flood for their evil doings.

31B. From The God Circle

"Anna Katharina Emmerick • Der Gotteskreis" (The God Circle), "in erstmaliger genauer Veröffentlichung der Urtexte" (a first exact revelation of the basic text) by Dr. Anton Brieger - Manz Verlag, München # 2nd ed. 1966 (pp. 479, 491-92, 496-97, 505-08, 514-15):

> «« Thus I saw the progress of the 'Blessing' of the Old Testament that I saw being taken from Adam before the original sin [which also had a spiritual content] and finally I arrived at images of the prior announcement of the most holy Virgin. After that I saw Adam and Eve in a series of images as also those regarding the history of the 'Blessing' from which the Holy Virgin issued, in whom the Word became flesh. […] However I believe that I noted that a change occurred in the will to sin [in the first humans] so that in sin they became animal people who had to feel shame (…) and something evil and unclean came into procreation. Chaff came into the wheat. However I saw, when Adam left his hill and went to Eve, as if the Lord seized him from behind and removed away a 'Blessing' from him. From this the salvation of the world was to come. (…)
>
> I saw that Ham was there and spied on him [Noah] and looked in the tent and, envying his father's 'Blessing', went to his brothers who were making noise to attract their father's attention. (…) Ham's blasphemy was comparable to what a person would commit if he entered the Ark of the Covenant. (…)

I saw light coming from heaven and shining on him [Abraham] and an angel, a messenger, standing before him, who spoke to him and handed over to him a shining heavenly gift, pear-shaped, soft and smooth. However something else, shadowy, appeared to be contained within it, as if it lived, and the angel spoke to him. And Abraham (…) opened his garment and placed the gift on his chest. (…) This was a new first germ of the Saviour, the material mystery of the purification of mankind up to Mary's birth, who was pure in order to receive the Saviour. It was the sacrament of the ancient testament, and I was given an explanation of the word procreation, begetting. (…) Abraham did not know what it was. (…) At the time it was very small and flat. The mystery was handed on to Joseph [and afterwards it ended up in the Ark of the Covenant]. Moses knew about it. (…) Nobody knew the finer details, except that it was the holiest of holies and had something to do with the coming of the Messiah. Its volume was always the same but its length changed. Moses had made the box [in which it was kept] (...)

Circumcision and rules for both sexes had their origin in the noble races in order to maintain their marriage or to divide them, and to prevent them mixing with lesser tribes. If a child was born whiter and with noble features, it had a great lead and that was cause for great joy. A single [adulterous] mingling with a tribesman could disrupt an entire future. [Hence in ancient Israel adultery by a woman was regarded as much more serious than that committed by a man, because in the one case wrong seed came from outside the family while in the other case the whole family remained pure.] The Messiah had to be born and the major task under the Old Testament was purity of procreation. But God told Abraham of how Jewish circumcision was to be carried out and gave him at the same time a sacrament of procreation, but this was taken from Jacob by the angel [who fought with him] and later under Moses it was the mystery of the Ark of the Covenant. (...) On the side of the non-noble tribes people were very eager to mix with noble people and tried to ennoble themselves and to destroy others. From this there often came often passionate desires for noble races. (...) The fact that the patriarchs (...) also mingled with women from outside the Jewish race was permitted by God. (...) Through this they were to [further] ennoble offshoots of these people and lead them into the procreative stream of Israel. The women they took to themselves were all marked and called vessels, and partly too offshoots who had previously quit their own tribe. (…)

I saw how Isaac gave to Jacob (...) the 'Blessing', which he had received from Abraham and Abraham from the angel. (...) I felt that this (...) was the 'Blessing', the germ. (...) The 'Blessing', which had been removed from Adam had been returned to Abraham and was handed on to Isaac from him and from Isaac to Jacob, but was later taken from Jacob by the angel, who fought with him, and it reached Joseph in Egypt. After Joseph's death and that of his wife it was no longer in the personal possession of people, the children of Israel, who had fallen into slavery. Moses was given it again on the night of the Exodus [from Egypt]. It was different from when it had been in the personal possession of Abraham's children. Its appearance was larger, and it seemed to have become double. Moses was then ordered to build a small chest around it and it was brought [in the Ark of the Covenant] to the Promised Land together with Joseph's bones. When Jeremiah hid the Ark of the Covenant, some of the holy objects came into possession of the prophets; and thus, at the time of Anne's grandparents, it was with the Essenes at Horeb. (...) In the Second Temple there was a reconstructed Ark. I do not know how the 'Blessing' came to be there, from where Joachim and Zachary took their inspiration. Everything disappeared with what they obtained. What they got was in itself not two, but one – as it had been with Abraham.

It consisted of a luminous coating. When Mary was born, she became the Ark of the Covenant. »»

31C. From Secrets of the Old and New Testaments

"Geheimnisse des Alten und des Neuen Bundes" (Secrets of the Old and New Testaments) edited by P. Karl Erhard Schmöger - Christiana-Verlag, Stein am Rhein, Switzerland # 13th impression 2001 (pp. 49-50, 101, 143-45) :

«« I have often seen that at the fall of the angels a certain number had a moment of regret and were not cast down as deep as the others and that they later were to be found on a lonely and very high mountain range, that during the Deluge became a lake, I believe the Black Sea. They had a certain freedom to attempt to influence people to the extent that they deviated from God. After the Flood they disappeared from there. (...) I saw the descendants of Cain becoming increasingly godless and sensual. They moved more and more towards the mountain range, and the fallen angels took many of their women, they ruled over them completely and taught them all the arts of seduction. Their children were very large, had many skills and talents, and gave themselves entirely up as tools of evil spirits. And thus in the mountains and for a great distance round about there came a depraved generation which, through violence and seduction wished to involve the descendants of Seth in their world of defamation. Then God announced the Flood to Noah, who had a great deal to suffer from these people when building his Ark.

I have seen many of these giant people; with the greatest of ease they dragged awesome rocks up the mountain; they climbed ever higher and did the most amazing things. They could even walk on walls and trees [vertically], as I happen to have seen with others who were possessed. (...) Enoch, Noah's forefather, tried to call them to order. He also wrote extensively, he was a very good man and very grateful to God. (...) The second angel made it known to Abraham that before his death he had to transfer the mystery of this 'Blessing', in the same way that he had received it, to Sara's firstborn, and that his grandson Jacob would father twelve sons from whom twelve tribes would arise. The angel also said that this 'Blessing' would again be taken from Jacob and [when the descendants of] Jacob had become a nation, the 'Blessing' would end up in the Ark of the Covenant, and that it had to be kept in existence through prayer. The angel showed Abraham that because of the people's wickedness the mystery of the Ark of the Covenant would be entrusted to the prophets and eventually to a man who was to be the father of the Virgin. (...)

Joachim was given the mystery of the Ark of the Covenant through an angel. And thus Mary [in the underground passages) was conceived under the Golden Gate of the Temple and with her birth she herself became the Ark of the mystery. The object of this was fulfilled and the wooden chest in the Temple was now no longer a sanctuary. When Joachim and Anna met together under the Golden Gate, they were surrounded by light and brilliance, and thus the Virgin Mary was conceived without original sin. »»

31D. From the Book of Enoch

"Enoch tried to call the depraved descendants of Seth to order. He also wrote extensively, he was a very good man and very grateful to God."

The original writings of Enoch have been lost, but they enjoyed a fine reputation in the early years of Christianity. They are quoted in the New Testament in 2 Peter 2:4-5 and in Jude 1:6, where the angels that had sinned in the days before Noah are mentioned. In 1768 an extremely old copy was discovered in Ethiopia by James Bruce. Although its authenticity has not been established, it contains important insights into the possible appearance on earth of giants in prehistoric times. When Genesis 6 is compared with ancient texts, including Enoch, Jubilees, Baruch, Genesis Apocryphon, Philo, Josephus and Jasher, it seems to indicate that the giants were the part-human, part-animal, part-angelic offspring of a supernatural corruption in the evolution of the species. The book of Enoch gives a name to the angels involved in this abomination, calling them 'Watchers'. Evidently an additional corruption entered the scheme, above that mentioned by Don Guido. Satan's goal at the time seems to have been to pollute the bloodline destined to produce the promised Seed. [The plan now, after Christ was born who carried out the redemptive work, is to prevent any human flesh from being saved.] The Old Testament contains reference to the genetic mutations that developed among humans following the Deluge, causing 'men' of unusual size and physical strength, with six fingers and toes on hands and feet. (2 Sam. 21:15-22) I now quote from Enoch as in "The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament", edited by R. H. Charles Oxford – The Clarendon Press # 1913 (ch. 6, 7, 12):

«« And it came to pass when the children of men had multiplied that in those days were born unto them beautiful and comely daughters. And the angels, the children of the heaven, saw and lusted after them, and said to one another: *"Come, let us choose us wives from among the children of men and beget us children."* And Semjaza, who was their leader, said unto them: *"I fear ye will not indeed agree to do this deed, and I alone shall have to pay the penalty of a great sin."* And they all answered him and said: *"Let us all swear an oath, and all bind ourselves by mutual imprecations not to abandon this plan but to do this thing."* Then swore they all together and bound themselves by mutual imprecations upon it. And they were in all two hundred, who descended in the days of Jared on the summit of Mount Hermon, and they called it Hermon [binding through cursing], because they had sworn and bound themselves by mutual imprecations upon it.

(…) And all the others together with them took unto themselves wives, and each chose for himself one, and they began to go in unto them and to defile themselves with them, and they taught them charms and enchantments, and the cutting of roots, and made them acquainted with plants. And they became pregnant, and they bare great giants, whose height was three thousand ells, who consumed all the acquisitions [cattle] of men. And when men could no longer sustain them, the giants turned against them and devoured mankind. And they began to sin against birds, and beasts, and reptiles, and fish, and to devour one another's flesh, and drink the blood. Then the earth laid accusation against the lawless ones.

(…) I Enoch was blessing the Lord of majesty and the King of the ages, and lo! the Watchers called me – Enoch the scribe – and said to me: Enoch, thou scribe of righteousness, go, declare to the Watchers of the heaven who have left the high heaven, the holy eternal place, and have defiled themselves with women, and have done as the children of earth do, and have taken unto themselves wives: *"Ye have wrought great destruction on the earth: and ye shall have no peace nor forgiveness of sin."* »»

31E. From Emmanuel - Visions of Anna Katharina Emmerick

"Emmanuel - Vizioenen van Anna Katarina Emmerick (Emmanuel - Visions of Anna Katharina Emmerick) edited by Father Pacificus Declercq - St. Sixtus Abbey, Westvleteren, Belgium # 1980 (part 1, pp. 44-55) :

«« By Adam's sin, human nature in its essence was deformed, maimed, reduced, depraved, filled with evil tendencies, especially in its reproductive capacity. The element taken from Adam [as yet unsullied and set aside], that favour, that power, escaped the degeneration; it mainly focused on the reproductive capacity and it was later returned back to humanity in the person of Abraham, the ancestor of the chosen people of God, but with reduced power. It was a tool, aiding to slow renewal, working mainly in the sphere of reproduction, and its purpose was to support the Saviour's lineage in its struggle against impure elements, in pursuit of purification; it was to gradually raise up the ancestors of Christ and the Holy Virgin, so that thanks to the ongoing purification process Joachim and Anne would be capable, by their exceptional purity, to produce the Immaculate Virgin and she, thanks to the special privilege of her Immaculate Conception, could become the Virgin Mother of the Redeemer. Mary was the fully-fledged flower of Adam's 'Blessing', while the Saviour was its highest and final fruit. (...)

The three patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – already referred to, were slightly fatter on the right side of their body than on the left. This was not noticeable because they wore their garments loose and wide. Thus the slightly fatter side was out of sight: on that side they were somewhat more substantial – a little swollen, as it were. There the 'Blessing', the mystery, was hidden. It was a beautiful thing, having the shape of a bean with a germ. The firstborn received it from his father and therefore the privilege he enjoyed was so valuable. (...) Joseph received the 'Blessing' that the angel had taken from Jacob in the same way as his predecessors had received it. This happened while he was in Pharaoh's prison in great misery for seven years. Joseph wore it in his right side until his death. The 'Blessing' then remained in his body until the night before the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. Then Moses removed it and gave it, with the bones of Joseph, a place in the chest [which was then the Ark of the Covenant] as the most sacred treasure, the precious jewel of the Chosen People. Previously this mystery had been a religious secret and a family possession and now it was the mysterious treasure, the most sacred object of the whole people: it took its place in the Ark of the Covenant just as our holy Eucharist does in the tabernacle. (...)

Few, even among the high priests, knew this secret and how to use it. (...) It was revealed to me that the Joachim received Abraham's 'Blessing' in its highest bloom

and perfection in order to realise and produce the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin. (...)

On this occasion I was also given the assurance that the spouses performed the act by which Mary was conceived without any admixture of lust and in holy obedience. It was also revealed to me that they subsequently lived in complete abstinence, the most exalted piety and fervent love. I was immediately shown clearly that the purity, chastity and abstinence of parents and their fight against all uncleanness have an immeasurable impact on the sanctity of the children they bring forth, and also how total abstinence after conception repels many seeds of sin. I saw it as a general rule that extravagance and intemperance are the source of deformity and sin.

(Note 6 of this edition:) The exceptional purity of the couple, Joachim and Anna, vaunted here, is also praised by the Virgin Mary herself in her words to Saint Bridget: *"God joined my father and mother in so chaste a marriage that there was no more chaste couple then to be found. They never desired to come together except in accordance with the Law, solely for the sake of procreation. When an angel announced to them that they would give birth to a Virgin from whom the Salvation of the world would come, they would rather have died than have come together in carnal love; lust had died in them. But, I assure you, out of divine charity and on account of the angel's message they did come together in the flesh, not out of concupiscence but against their will and out of love for God. In this way my flesh was put together from their seed through divine love. So it is true that I was conceived without sin, and as my Son and I have not sinned, no marriage so honourable and pure has existed as that from which I sprang."* »» (Rev. 1:9; cf. IV:119,140; VI:49,55)

APPENDIX 15

Wherever Man no longer has a living soul, he is the Beastman

From Maria Valtorta's Notebooks - December 30, 1946
Writings inspired by God

Adam and Eve did not curse even Cain, but wept over the one dead in the flesh [Abel) and the one dead in spirit [Cain] in equal measure, recognizing that the pain which God had permitted was just because they had created Pain with their sin and had to be the first to experience it in all of its ramifications. They thus remained children of God, and, along with them, the descendants coming after this pain.

Cain sinned against love for God and love for his neighbor. He violated love completely, and God cursed him, and Cain did not repent. He and his children were thus nothing but children of the animal called man. If the first sin of Adam made man degenerate to such a degree, what measure of decadence must have been produced by the second, to which God's curse was joined? What must have been the sources of sin in the heart of the animal-man and what power must they have reached after Cain had not only listened to the counsel of the Accursed One [the devil], but embraced him as his beloved master, killing as ordered by him? The descent of one branch, the one poisoned by satanic possession, knew no rest and took on a thousand faces.

When Satan seizes, he corrupts in all ramifications. When Satan is king, the subject becomes a satan: a satan with all the unbridledness of Satan; a satan going against divine and human law; a satan violating even the most elementary and instinctive norms of life among men endowed with a soul and becoming brutish with the foulest sins of bestial man. Wherever God is not present, Satan is. Wherever man no longer has a living soul, he is the beastman. The beast loves the beasts. Carnal lust – more than carnal, because it is seized and sharpened by Satan – makes him avid for all unions. What is horrid and disturbing, like a nightmare, strikes him as beautiful and seductive. What is licit does not satisfy him. It is too little and too honest. He is mad with lust for what is illicit, degrading, and bestial. Those who were no longer children of God, because, with their father and like their father, they had fled God to accept Satan, ventured precisely into what is illicit, degrading, and bestial. And they had monsters as sons and daughters…

Those monsters, who now impress your scientists and lead them into error, those monsters who, because of their powerful physique and savage beauty and ferocious boldness – results of the union between Cain and the beasts, between the most beastly children of Cain and the brutes – seduced the children of God, that is, the descendants of Seth through Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch of Jared [not to be confused with Enoch of Cain], Methuselah, Lamech, and Noah, the father of Shem, Ham, and Japheth. It was then that God, to keep the branch of the children of God from being entirely corrupted by the branch of the children of men, sent the universal deluge to extinguish men's lust under

the weight of the waters and destroy the monsters begotten by the lust of the godless, insatiable in sensuality because aroused by the fires of Satan.

And man, contemporary man, jabbers about somatic lines and zygomatic angles. And in not wanting to admit a Creator because he is too proud to acknowledge that he has been made, he admits descent from the beasts! In order to say to himself: “By ourselves we evolved from animals into men.” He degrades himself, practices self-degradation, because he refuses to humble himself before God. And he is sinking. Oh, he is really sinking! In the times of the initial corruption his appearance was animal; now his thoughts and heart are. And his soul, because of deeper and deeper union with evil, has taken on Satan’s visage in too many cases.

Write this dictation in the book. I would have dealt with the subject in greater breadth, as I told you in the place of your exile, to refute the blameworthy theories of too many pseudo-experts. But there must clearly be a punishment for those who do not want to hear Me in the words you write under my dictation. I would have revealed great mysteries, so that man would ‘know’, now that the times are ripe. It is no longer a time to content the masses with fables. Under the metaphor of the ancient stories there are the key truths for all the mysteries in the universe. And I would have explained them through my little patient John, so that man would draw strength from knowing the truth to climb back up from the abyss and be on the same level as the enemy in the final struggle which will precede the end of a world. In spite of all of God’s help, it did not want to become a ‘pre-paradise’, but preferred to become a ‘pre-hell’. Show this page without handing it over to the ones you know you should.

For one [this revelation] will help against the remains of a pseudo-science atrophying the heart; for others it will assist an already strong spirituality through which they may see the unmistakable sign of God in everything.

Historiography of the Old Testament

Aleppo Codex ± 935 AD (Joshua 1:1)

We pray to "God the Father". What is a father? It is someone who puts himself out for his children and, if necessary, intervenes in an active way. And as God has done in the past, so will He also in the future. But not unannounced! And that is known as prophecy. The Bible is the history book par excellence. It is the 'Magister Historiae' (teacher of history). The stories in the Bible were not written down inconsequentially. In addition to a solid historical core[132)] it has especially a religious significance, and the various books – and they are not few in number! – form an organic whole. And thus 'The Book' has become a composition, a melody. It makes the invisible God visible through His interventions. The opposite is also true: to take away the historical basis is to remove God. This article discusses a number of important aspects relative to the way the Bible came into being in the light of the reliability of the handing down of the text. It should be realised that any uncertain transmission of the text brings the prophetic content of the Bible into disrepute. The core question is: does God speak through the Bible or not?

2.32 – How the Biblical script came into being

Script – a manner of writing – is required if something is to be written down. The script of Moses, preserved by the Samaritan sect [133)], somewhat closely resembles what is known as proto-Sinaitic, found in inscriptions in rock on the Sinai peninsula, a region known to the

132) The fact that the Bible has a solid historical core does not justify wild speculations. Thus Genesis, for instance, gives a thematic overview, but this does not justify seeing the six days of creation as just 6x twenty-four hours.

133) The Samaritan sect still exists and has its own synagogue in Nablus, formerly known as Sichem. The sect has about 750 followers at present (in the year 2015) and they have excellent relations with the Orthodox Jews. It has not always been like that.

Bible as Paran.[134)] The form of its glyphs is derived from the Egyptian hieroglyphics. The first description of these remarkable inscriptions is that given by Cosmas, nicknamed Indicopleustes (Indian seafarer), who lived in the 6th century AD. His conclusion, confirmed by 19th century linguistic research by such people as Professor Lottin de Laval, was that the inscriptions were the work of Israelites who, during their sojourn in the wilderness set about perfecting their newly acquired writing skills, and thus worked with the same industry as that shown by a new pupil in a quiet school. I should mention that it is characteristic of the Hebrew script that originally there were no vowels, and thus a sort of secret script came into being.

It is assumed that the Phoenicians were the first to invent phonetic writing, from which in succession Aramaic and Greek script came into being, but that is incorrect. The earliest Phoenician alphabet, dated around 1400 BC, consisted of 22 letters, the same number as the Ancient Hebrew script. And, as is universally agreed, all those symbols were developed on the basis of hieroglyphs. There is no proof that the Phoenicians may claim the honour to have been the first.[135)] In fact, the Exodus occurred at an earlier date, in the 15th century BC – when the Phoenicians were not known to have had a script. For commercial transactions (the Phoenicians were traders), the cumbersome cuneiform script that consists of around 800 symbols, was more than adequate. Thanks to its simplicity the aleph-beth system became accessible to everyone, and it laid the foundation for intricate thought constructs. The Egyptians themselves show, by the name given to Joseph when he was co-regent over Egypt (Gen. 41:45), that he was the inventor of the phonetic script. The Dutch Staten translation of the Bible reads Zafnath Paänéah. Based on Parthey's Coptic dictionary[136)] it can easily be read as Caphenath Pahenecha, or: "He who reduced script to its basic elements and succeeded in bringing to light the basis of the sounds." It is therefore Joseph himself who turns out to be the Phoenician – the P(a)henech(iar)! And thus the invention of phonetic writing can be dated to when Joseph lived, or the late 18th century BC.

2.33 – God gave his own language

In order to enable the reader to understand the how and the why of Biblical script, I would like to turn your attention to the Crombette method. Fernand Crombette was born in Lille

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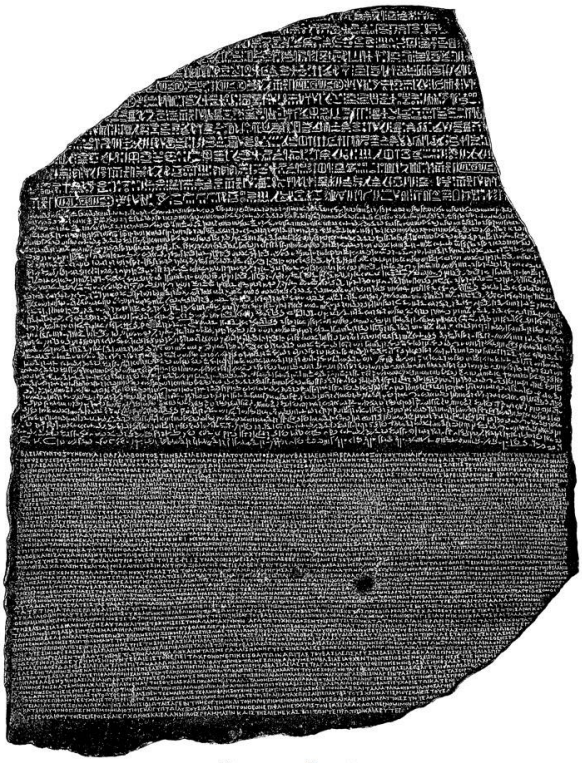
134) The Biblical Sinai lies elsewhere (cf. Ex. 3:1, 17:6 and Gal. 4:25) and is not the region now known as Sinai. The Sinai now was formely called Paran (cf. Num. 13:3, 26).

135) We read the following about the discovery of the Alphabet in the Annals of Tacitus (Bk 3, 11:14): "It was the Egyptians who first symbolized ideas, and that by the figures of animals [initially by the animals of the zodiac]. These records, the most ancient of all human history, are still engraved on stone. The Egyptians also claim to have invented the alphabet, which, they say, the Phoenicians through Cadmus [Herodotus refers to Cadmus], by means of their seamanship, introduced into Greece, of which they appropriated the glory, giving out that they had discovered what in fact they had been taught."

136) According to Parthey's Old Coptic dictionary: "Vocabularium coptico-latinum...", Berlin # 1844, Old Coptic being the language of the Pharaohs ['copt' is derived from E(cypt)], Joseph's name reads as: Sah-phenk-noc-pa-en-he-kah, or: scribere, reducere, princeps, qui pertinet ad, extrahere, ratio, sonus. In ordered language: "He who reduced script to its basic elements and succeeded in bringing to light the basis of the sounds."

in 1880 and after retirement worked intensively on the Bible and the hieroglyphs until his death in 1970.[137)] Many readers will have heard of Champollion. On 22nd September 1822 he wrote his famous "letter on the alphabet of the phonetic hieroglyphs". Because of the enormous number of hieroglyphs – more than 6,000 have been discovered until now – there is serious reason to doubt this system as the unique key to understanding the Egyptian script, whereby only the first letter of the object depicted is retained. Crombette realised that the Rosetta Stone, on which Champollion's conclusions were based, dated from a very late period of the Egyptian empire and was destined for foreigners who only needed to be acquainted with the primitive version. The famous text, dating from 196 BC, is a sweet-sounding paean of praise of Ptolemy V, a prince of Greek origin who ruled over Egypt as an occupier. This version, reproduced on stone also in Late Coptic and Greek, is thus not necessarily representative, a conclusion already drawn by others. At the end of the 1940s Crombette discovered that the hieroglyphs could be read as a rebus, whereby a large number of meanings are revealed thanks to the monosyllabic character of the Late Coptic. Using his method Crombette wrote 8000 pages of translation and analysis. One cannot simply translate what one wishes, since if independent groups work on a text they come to more or less the same conclusions. And thus the Rosetta Stone turns out to contain a call to resistance. According to a translation by Madame Geneville it reads as follows: "*We must break the chain that ties us to those who exploit us, oppress and humiliate us, so that we may be reborn and become as we used to be*" and also: "*The sistrum (rattle) moves as a sign of cursing, with the aim of releasing itself from him who humiliates us."*



Steen van Rosetta

Crombette discovered that the hieroglyphs are a secret language, which on a deeper level next to the normal text can contain magic spells, terrible curses and wizardry. For Joseph, co-regent of Egypt, but first and foremost a servant of the living God, it was

137) Crombette was a scholar redolent of a different age. A self-educated and solitary researcher, who confined himself to his study and his libraries, he worked for God's glory and sought neither to attract attention nor recognition. He therefore signed his publications with "un catholique français" (a French Catholic). He left many books, entirely written between 1933 and 1967 after having pursued an administrative career. His zeal stemmed from the only motive to prove the scientific and historical inerrancy of the Bible, in the pursuit of which he followed extremely unorthodox ideas. Our main interest here is in his effort to translate the Bible as if it were Coptic, given in his last book published shortly before his death, that was called "La Révélation de la Révélation" (The revelation of the Revelation). It shows a translation of the first eleven chapters of Genesis and other characteristic passages after they were first transcribed into Coptic.

unacceptable that his people should make use of such a language. For that reason God gave him another secret language consisting of consonants linked together. This was not an obvious solution, since normally a consonant is not pronounced without a vowel: the 'r' is pronounced 'ar', the 'b' becomes 'bee' and so on. Because of this the consonant system contained a multitude of meanings. The first step in mastering the many meanings, it is assumed, consisted in turning the monosyllabic two-letter words into three-letter words. The Hebrew roots would not always have been triple-lettered! The Jewish scriptural scholars reckon that it is very unlikely that the Hebrew language started off with the three-letter roots that now occur exceedingly regularly. It is assumed that Hebrew was originally monosyllabic, although there is no hard evidence to support the claim.[138)]

In the steadily further circumscription of God's Word over the course of the centuries, a process that in the beginning uncovered many choices of meaning, lies the progressive knowledge of God's plan for the world. Thus the Word has been more and more crystallised out. God must have known this beforehand – not just known but willed. I do not regard this in general as an impoverishment, though the risk is present here and there. In those cases where our insight has become too small-minded God's Spirit will lead the community to greater understanding – from an unfolding of the text. And the Jewish knowledge of Holy Scripture too can help us in this. I believe time is ripe to delve further into the mysteries of the original Hebrew.

While I worked on this article, I came across the interesting work, accomplished by Chris Tyreman. What he discovered is called the Self Defined Hebrew (SDH) system.[139)] He started with the premise that the ancient Hebrew was basically separate from all other languages. In scientific circles Hebrew is believed to have evolved from other languages. The SDH system denies that possibility, which I agree with. In my view it is just the opposite: all other (Adamitic) languages, including modern Hebrew, evolved from the primal Hebrew. In my article "The Jewish vernacular in Jesus' time" I explain that God gave Adam a language 'from above', which happened a second time during the Babylonian confusion of languages and again during the Exodus. The primordial Hebrew and its first linguistic descendents were like Coptic monosyllabic. So is the system developed by the Tyreman team. In such a language each separate syllabe typically expresses several notions, for which we now have different words. By combining syllabes in a polysyllabic

138) In this context it is interesting that Crombette managed to make a translation up to and including Genesis 11 on the basis of monosyllabic Coptic, which still does not prove that the original Hebrew was the same as Coptic. God can have left both possibilities open: that the first chapters of Holy Scripture can be read both in Coptic and in the original Hebrew, only to meet the requirements of the ordinary people who had lost the Hebrew language during the long sojourn in Egypt. The Bible and tradition indicate that during the confusion of tongues at the Tower of Babel God made an exception by giving Heber (or Eber) the original language from Paradise again 'from the other side' (as his name signifies) – thus from heaven – that was not derived from the other languages such as Coptic. From this it follows that before God started on 'his' Bible, He had already created the language in which it had to be written. The Bible is therefore a 'holy book' in a 'holy language'.

139) "Unmasking the Grand Delusion" by Christopher Tyreman - Aavara Books, Canada # 2021.

word, they add on without deformation, contrary to what happens in a inflectional language, where related words have conjunctions, prepositions or otherwise. Because syllabes are 'roots', they represent a substantif as well as an adjective or a verb in the infinitif, the past or present, without changing form. Therefore, in ancient Hebrew there are no 'words of wisdom' but 'words wisdom', there is no 'who is wise?' but 'who wise', there is no 'I beg you to tell them you're my sister' but 'tell my sister you'. A monosyllabic language is essentially analytic. To really understand ancient Hebrew, we have to decompose the words into its parts. We need to go back in time, because the natural development of a monosyllabic language tends toward a polysyllabic and inflectional language. But to 'go back' is easier said than done. I believe the Tyreman team has made a commendable attempt at that.

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תולדות
Supreme annals

v16 To respond to the woman to declare,"The supply (of) offspring, your labor[1.] and the shout, your to birth, to proceed to care for sons.
And to respond to your man, to proceed to overflow continuing your. And known as so to rule inside you.[2.]
v17 And to appointed to declare, "As so, to listen to, to call (of) your wife and to proceed to eat being from the tree to progress.[3.]
My decree your, to declare, not to proceed to eat that being from.

Here is an example of the Self Defining Hebrew as presented by by Chris Tyreman for the verses 16 and 17 of Genesis 3.

(16.
אל ה/אשה אמר ה/רבה
to respond to | the woman | to declare | the supply

ארבה עצבונ/ך ו/ה/רנ/ך
offspring | your travail | and the shout your

בעצב ת/לדי בנים ו/אל
to birth | to proceed to care for | sons | and to respond to

אישׁ/ך ת/שוקת/ך ו/הוא
your man | to proceed to overflow continuing your | and known as

י/משל ב/ך
so to rule | inside you

(17.
ו/ל/אדם אמר כי שמעת
And to appointed | to declare | as so | to listen

ל/קול אשת/ך ו/ת/אכל מן
to, to call | wife your | and to proceed to eat | from

ה/עץ אשר צויתי/ך
the tree | to progress | decree my, your

ל/אמר לא ת/אכל מ/מנ/ו
to declare | not | to proceed to eat | that from being

1. This was not a curse to the woman as most translators assume, but rather an explanation to her of the work now entailed before her.
2. This whole section is of great importance. It reads that the raising of children is what rules over the woman in the idea that she has overwhelming affection to them, NOT to her husband as is shown in standard translations. The response to her man, is to become overflowing. To become pregnant.
3. As it stand, you , you listened to what your wife wanted and went ahead and ate from the tree which progresses a person.

To pretend to have found ‘a better translation’ for what already exists, where I have in mind the “King James Version”, is far too pretentious, even blasphemous. Tyreman’s system should not be seen as a way to ‘improve’ current Bible translations, for God has always watched over his Word, and it would be short of his omnipotence to think that textual evolution would not be part of the God-willed tradition. The SDH, if truthful, does serve to deepen our understanding of Holy Scripture. It forms, as it were, the skeleton on which the textual tradition has built on. A body without flesh is dead, then the skeleton remains. That is the meaning of the SDH - again, if truthful.

The Tyreman team does not want to provide a key to all the books of the Tenach (the Old Testament). They limited their work to the Torah (the books written by Moses), where, of course, it all started. The SDH will not apply to the later books, such as Isaiah, which was written some 700 years later, because a language and its written record is subject to constant change, whether given by God or not. We can see the SDH as a kind of etymological approach. The question that remains open is within what framework the SDH is applicable. The main viewpoint seems to be that the God-given Hebrew primal language (die Ursprache) starts from an abstract (or spiritual) idea and then arrives at a concrete object. This is also how the CREATION came into being. As stated in Job 26:7: “God hangs the Universe on the intangible (b’lee mah).” In ordinary languages, a word begins with a concrete object only to arrive at an abstract idea, which is just the other way round. In Chapter 2 of the internet edition in 2011, on account of the SDH system, the following passage occurs:

> «« There is a word in ancient Hebrew pronounced Nathan. You have probably heard it as a person’s name. It means ‘to give’. Nothing more, nothing less, and I (Chris Tyreman) can tell you with certainty from what we found that this is exactly what it means. Nathan (to give) is rendered by such words as (in the Kal conjugation): “to add, apply, appoint, ascribe, assign, bestow, bring, bring forth, cast, cause, charge, come, commit, consider, count, deliver, deliver up, direct, distribute, fasten, frame, give, give forth, give over, give up, grant, hang, hang up, lay, lay to charge, lay up, leave, lend, let, let out, lift up, make, O that, occupy, offer, ordain, pay, perform, place, pour, print, put, put forth, recompense, render, requite, restore, send, send out, set, set forth, shew, shoot forth, shoot up, strike, suffer, thrust, trade, turn, utter, would God, yield”. Besides 17 varieties in idiomatic renderings, this adds up to 84! I hope you see my point. This is the latitude that the translators have taken with words appearing in the Bible. The rules are set up to make sure that you will translate a word a certain way at a certain time. Yet the rules themselves conflict with themselves. Rather than go into the glorious details, let us rather end this section by saying that we quitely closed the books one day and came up with this idea: “How is it that by the age of five a Hebrew shepherd boy would be fluent in ancient Hebrew, but those with twenty years study in the Hebrew language in our age, still cannot come to consensus on the meaning of certain words? Did the Hebrew boy memorize the rules? Yet he had no problem.” »»

After many futile attempts and some good luck the team deviced a list of the affects (directional meanings) on the root words of each of the 22 Hebrew letters or glyphs. It was

considered that the two letter root words (two glyphs) were not words at all, for each glyph carries its own concept. Each glyph of the Hebrew language was not a phonetic letter after all, but rather a specific symbol, just as the Egyptians hieroglyphs, but with an essential difference: the complete language consists of only 22 glyphs, which by simple combinations create any idea that one wishes to convey. This is why there is no punctuation in the original Hebrew, because spaces create breaks. Using these glyphs alone, there are well over 6,000 glyph sets for meanings, and more can be introduced if required.

Two glyphs together form the central idea, with any other preceding and following glyphs adding detail to the initial central idea. If we take the Hebrew ‘n-th-c’, that meanse ‘to tear up’, the direction changes by exchanging the last glyph. The first two glyphs carry the idea, and the third carries the movement of the idea, as follows: tear up, tear out, tear down, tear off, tear asunder and tear away. This reflects a very common pattern in ancient Hebrew script. The glyphs following a word-concept, or the suffixes, channel the initial concept to the final concept. One rarely finds a single glyph without another. This is not because it takes two glyphs to make a word, but it does to make a concept, which gives enough description in the narrative to convey an understanding. Chris Tyreman explains that, although at first it will be difficult to know where the two main glyphs are in any set of glyphs, it becomes – like in any language – easier with exercise. Soon it will be second nature to see the main concept, and its equivalent in our language. Interestingly enough, he explains, it is almost impossible to find the wrong meaning within the particular context of a sentence. Remember that each glyph set that was once thought to be a word, is actually a set of concepts which are grouped to convey a complete thought. Also remember that Hebrew is a language of movements or actions (adjectives) not of nouns, or names with no meaning attached other than what the word represents, which by reading a Hebrew dictionary immediately catches the eye. If you were given the word ‘fish’ in English, you would understand its application because you have been taught so. Hebrew, on the other hand, consists of a description of the ‘movement’ of the fish, conveying its typical motion.

With a language constructed of descriptions instead of nouns, the written language cannot evolve that easily, and be modified or adapted for other meanings. In English, the word ‘cool’, should mean an item which has lost heat, but has also become slang for one who is stylish. So a stylish person can be described as, cool, hot, sweet, etc. And so the word loses it original meaning, and over time, the original concept of the word itself is lost as the language evolves. Someone attempting to read English from thousand years ago, would barely understand any of the words, and five hundred years from now, the words as we speak today will also have become archaic. Original SDH-Hebrew does not suffer from this problem. If we use the Hebrew method, instead of having the noun ‘cool’, we would have the description ‘to lose heat’. So if someone wished to attach this term to a stylish person, it would not function, because it does not fit the description. With this in mind, one might create a new description using the Hebrew, but the basic concepts remain unchanged and remain clearly recognizable in the description of the object. In English, for instance, the word ‘light’ represents the visible spectrum, but the same word can also

mean the opposite of heavy. In ancient Hebrew writing, this is impossible because the three glyph set is comprised of the two main glyphs (aleph, waw), aleph meaning 'to activate' and waw meaning 'to be in that state', or: 'more activity', 'to add', 'in the state of activation'. This forms the two glyph set 'to give off power'. The third glyph is represented by the letter resh, which means 'to spread out'. This three glyph set gives a precise description of what 'illumination' is. Because it is not just a name, like in English, this writing method prevents the application of the set to some totally unrelated item.

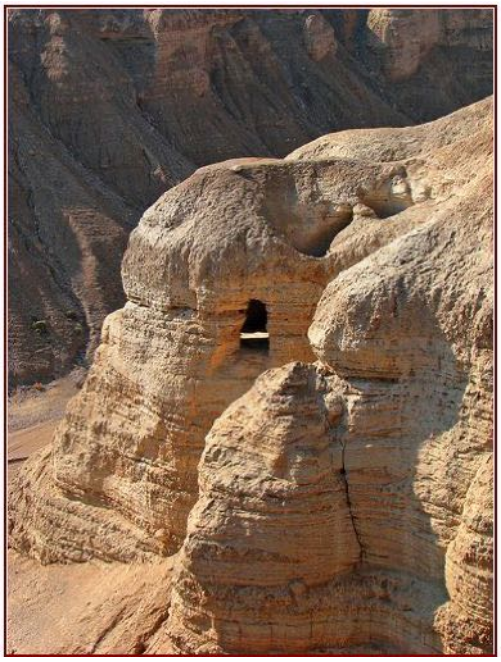
Unlike other languages, ancient Hebrew suffered less from the caving in of its base through the invasion of foreign words. A word from another culture would have no intelligable meaning to one using the Hebrew language. Although sounds can be easily transferred, the meanings of those sounds would form a gibberish concept. Take for instance the word 'bottles'. In ancient Hebrew, the consonants b - t - l - s mean 'inside', 'to make ordered', 'to', 'enclosed', which leads to the meaning: to be secured to, enclosed, or: stop enclosed. At best this might be a cork. So, in order to have a word for an unknown item, it is easier to apply the 22 known glyphs than to introduce a completely new term. The first Israelites looked for a description, not a name! With this in mind, it becomes obvious that ancient Hebrew, did not evolve upwards from the surrounding cultures. It shows a logic construct, unlike any spoken language we have. It is adaptable, yet resistant to change (at least in written form). This methodology supports the argument that the original Hebrew is not a human-created language. In any case, it supports the view that of the Semitic language group it is and was the parent language, which has undergone significant changes over time that have pushed the first version beyond the horizon. Yet its inherent logic allowed it to be revived at any time. The concept brilliantly discovered by Chris Tyreman and his team provides an interesting perspective regarding the genesis of Holy Scripture.

It was not until the Babylonian Exile (6th century BC) that the current square script (a set of glyphs) was adopted for the rolls of Biblical script instead of the ancient script, which the Samaritans have maintained to this day. At the time the square script was adopted from the Aramaic alphabet (aleph-beth). With its introduction, extra vowel symbols were invented. Before that time the reader really needed to know what was written in order to be able to read the text. And thus around the year 100 AD Rabbi Akiba set the definitive version of the alephbeth-text following the Rabbinic convention at Jamnia, and it was only very late on – in the 9th and 10th centuries AD – that the vowel system was applied throughout the entire Old Testament and became definitive (via the Masoretic Nikkud or points system). The Thorah rolls used for religious services remained without punctuation. The term 'masora' (bond) is taken from Ezekiel 20:37: "*I will bring you into the bond of the covenant*", meaning chain, buoy and binding. The Jewish encyclopaedia says: "*The fixation of the text was correctly considered to be in the nature of a 'fetter' upon its exposition."* Even this script is characterised by its capacity for being subject to different translations. Thus the Dutch Staten translation (the oldest Dutch reformatoric translation) in Isaiah 59:19 presents the enemy coming like a flood, while in the Catholic Willibrord translation it is not the enemy but God – and yet both are correct. This may not be regarded as representative but it does indicate the possibilities. The Bible contains sacred mea-

nings. In contrast to the Egyptian curses blessings are pronounced. The Staten translation does justice to this. The newer translations seeking to make the text more comprehensible are more open to question.

2.34 – The significance of the Septuagint and the Vulgate

Because the definitive alephbeth-text originates in the first century, the first Christians showed a preference for the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew-Alexandrian version of the Old Testament. This translation came into being in the 3rd century BC and for that reason was seen as more reliable than the later Hebrew-Judean version. It is assumed that the differences between both versions are mostly not essential. It is 'assumed' because the original Hebrew versions were lost; until recently the oldest Hebrew texts dated from 895 AD. Thanks to the discoveries at Qumran by the Dead Sea, made after the Second World War, there is more to be said on the subject. And what becomes apparent? The Hebrew texts and the Biblical quotations found at Qumran agree more with the Alexandrian (i.e. the Septuagint) than with the Judean version. What is remarkable is that the texts from the Old Testament quoted in the New Testament are always based on the Septuagint, of which the oldest complete versions date from the 4th century AD. Older parts are also known – from, among other sources, Qumran. This shows that the Septuagint too has been subject to changes. The preference shown by the early Christians outside Israel for the Septuagint was prompted by the fact that they mostly knew Greek but scarcely any Hebrew – and, indeed, it is in Greek that the New Testament has come down to us, not necessarily the original language in which all the texts were written down. At the Jewish convention in Jamnia, held in the year 80 AD, the rabbis rejected the Septuagint as less reliable,[140] but because the quotes in the New Testament are taken from the Septuagint, I feel free to hold a different opinion. Moreover the discoveries made at Qumran seem to prove me right. It could very well be that the Alexandrian text is closer to the original text than the Judean – thus the opposite of what the Jamnia convention decided. It is not difficult to guess why the rabbis rejected the Septuagint. It must have had to do with the definitive break between Judaism and Christianity. In fact, the Christians had not taken part in the war against Rome (from 66 to 73) also known as the Great Uprising (ha-Mered Ha-Gadol), and that was deeply resented. The Jewish tendency at the time was to gloss over as much



The caves of Qumran

140) Currently a great deal of interest is shown by the Jewish community in restoring the Septuagint to its original form, which apparently is not an impossibility.

as possible every Biblical reference to Christ, and in that they were hindered by the Septuagint. Why would they not have fiddled with the Septuagint at some later stage? That was not particularly difficult because of the multiplicity of translations that is given in the original Hebrew.

The Latin Bible translation, the Vulgate, that was made in the early 5th century AD, was ever since preferred by the Christian community. It met a need because at the time Latin was within everyone's reach, at least in the Western part of Christendom. In 1564, during the Council of Trent, the Vulgate was even raised to the status of official version of the Bible in an attempt to combat the Reformation. But no indication was given as to which version of the Vulgate. In doubtful cases the Hebrew source text could be consulted but never as a means of changing the meaning of the Vulgate. This caused the Hebrew-Judean version to move into the background within the Roman Catholic establishment… also exegetical. This was not the case in Protestant circles, who worked closely with Jewish scribes for their translations. The Protestants, for their part, condemned the Vulgate. Both, Protestants as well as Catholics, seem to have gone too far in their religious fervour…

The fact that the Vulgate should serve as source language for translations is not necessarily a bad thing. Unfortunately the conciliar decision of 1546 also led to the opinion that the Latin version would totally and completely suffice for the purposes of exegesis. But Latin can never reveal the accompanying range of meanings proper to Hebrew. Hebrew appears to be an indispensable tool in the exegetic arsenal! In the case of the New Testament, a referencing back to the Hebrew background of the terms used – Greek was a second language for the dedicated writers – can lead to important insights. This tendency to use the Vulgate as the unique source language, which started already in the Middle Ages, led to a devaluation of the Old Testament and to insufficient knowledge in that area even by Roman Catholic specialists who, though with a knowledge of Hebrew, were unable to distil out its quintessence. In Protestant circles, certainly in the Netherlands, it was a different story.

With his 1943 encyclical "Divino Afflante Spiritu" (With the Help of the Divine Spirit) Pope Pius XII wished to correct misapprehensions regarding the decree of the Council of Trent, which states that *"the entire Books with all their parts, as they have been wont to be read in the Catholic Church and are contained in the old Vulgate Latin edition, are to be held sacred and canonical."* Among other things the encyclical discusses the way in which the decree came into being and the consequences this brought with it:

> «« The Fathers of the Church in their time, especially Augustine, warmly recommended to the Catholic scholar, who undertook the investigation and explanation of the Sacred Scriptures, the study of the ancient languages and recourse to the original texts. However, such was the state of letters in those times, that not many - and these few but imperfectly - knew the Hebrew language. In the middle ages, when Scholastic Theology was at the height of its vigour, the knowledge of even the Greek language had long since become so rare in the West, that even the greatest Doctors of that time, in their exposition of the Sacred Text, had recourse only to the Latin version, known

as the Vulgate. On the contrary in this our time, not only the Greek language, which since the humanistic renaissance has been, as it were, restored to new life, is familiar to almost all students of antiquity and letters, but the knowledge of Hebrew also and of their oriental languages has spread far and wide among literary men. Moreover there are now such abundant aids to the study of these languages that the Biblical scholar, who by neglecting them would deprive himself of access to the original texts, could in no wise escape the stigma of levity and sloth. For it is the duty of the exegete to lay hold, so to speak, with the greatest care and reverence of the very least expressions which, under the inspiration of the Divine Spirit, have flowed from the pen of the sacred writer, so as to arrive at a deeper and fuller knowledge of its meaning. (…) Nor should anyone think that this use of the original (Hebrew) texts, in accordance with the methods of criticism, in any way derogates from those decrees so wisely enacted by the Council of Trent concerning the Latin Vulgate. **From the historical archives it appears that the Presidents of the Council received a commission - which they duly carried out - to beg the Sovereign Pontiff in the name of the Council, that he should correct as far as possible first a Latin, and subsequently also a Greek and a Hebrew edition, which eventually would be published for the benefit of the Holy Church of God.** If this desire could not then be fully realized owing to the difficulties of the times and other obstacles, at present it can, we earnestly hope, be more perfectly and entirely fulfilled by the united efforts of Catholic scholars. And if the Tridentine Synod wished *"that all should use as authentic"* the Vulgate Latin version, this, as all know, applies only to the Latin Church and to the public use of the same Scriptures; nor does it, doubtless, in any way diminish the authority and value of the source texts. For there was no question then of these texts, but of the Latin versions, which were in circulation at that time, and of these the same Council rightly declared to be preferable that which *"had been approved by its long-continued use for so many centuries in the Church."* Hence this special authority or as they say, authenticity of the Vulgate was not affirmed by the Council particularly for critical reasons, but rather because of its legitimate use in the Churches throughout so many centuries; by which use indeed the same is shown, in the sense in which the Church has understood and understands it, to be free from any error whatsoever in matters of faith and morals; so that, as the Church herself testifies and affirms, it may be quoted safely and without fear of error in disputations, in lectures and in preaching; and so its authenticity is not specified primarily as critical, but rather as 'juridical'. »» (§§ 14-15, 20-21)

The Vulgate is a fine piece of work on the part of Jerome, who is praised as the most learned of the Latin fathers of the Church. Jerome learned Hebrew with great labor in his mature years. He first followed lessons from a converted but anonymous Jew during his five years' ascetic seclusion in the Syrian desert of Chalcis (374–79). Afterwards he studied in Bethlehem [in about the year 385] being taught by Rabbi Bar-Anina, who through fear of the Jews visited him by night: "My teacher feared for his life like another Nicodemus." This exposed him to the foolish rumor among bigoted opponents, that he preferred Judaism to Christianity and betrayed Christ in preference to the new 'Barabbas'. He

afterwards, in translating the Old Testament, brought other Jewish scholars to his aid, who cost him dear. (…) Though his knowledge of Hebrew was defective, it was much greater than that of Origen, Epiphanius and Ephraem Syrus, the only other Fathers besides himself who understood Hebrew at all. His linguistic accomplishment is the more noticeable, when we consider the want of grammatical and lexicographical helps and of the Masoretic punctuation (that was not applied until much later).[141)] In addition to different Hebrew versions, including the Samaritan, his Vulgate relies heavily on the Septuagint and other Greek translations such as that done by a convert to Judaism known as Aquila, a pupil of Akiba.[142)]

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), a man with extensive Biblical knowledge, remarkably enough knew neither Hebrew nor Greek, though he did speak fluent Latin. This gives an impression of the approach to the Scriptures at the time of the Reformation. But Jerome's Vulgate was not the last word in this matter, for it underwent many changes in later centuries – which, with the exception of the version of Pope Clement in 1592 came nowhere near equalling the literary-technical quality of the original Vulgate, which also existed in various versions because Jerome made several variant translations, such as a literal as well as a literary version of the Psalms. Commissioned by Rome in 1977, the Neo Vulgate saw the light of day, with adjustments made in the light of the Greek and Hebrew texts. It is satisfactory as reading material, but not as a source text. For that the Clementine version still stands, having served among other things for the CPDV (Catholic Public Domain Version of the Sacred Bible).[143)] A slightly edited version of the Clementine Vulgate was introduced in 2009.

In the present discussion it is not a question of the one good translation – such a thing does not exist and should not be sought after! It is more a question of different translation traditions all of which have their right to exist, since no single translation, no single translator, is capable of giving God's prophetic message. The Clementine Vulgate is mainly based on that of Jerome, but also on an amazing amount of material that sometimes goes far back in the history of the Church and thus deserves our respect, for the church fathers had at their disposal documents, such as the Hexapla of Origen, which were lost long ago.

The above may give the impression that the Biblical text has been corrupted over the course of thousands of years. But that is not the case. We may assume that many changes have been made to details and that an error may have crept in here and there, but this in no way affects the inspired character of Scripture. The 'fixation' of the text (into separate

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141) Taken from "Volume III, §161-80" of the "History of the Christian Church" by Philip Schaff - Charles Scribner's Sons # 1910 (§176 with its note 2098); carefully compared, corrected and emended by "The Electronic Bible Society" - Dallas, USA # 1998.

142) Aquila's translation is from the first half of the 2nd century AD and is sometimes so literal that the Greek is incomprehensible for those not versed in Hebrew. It was, in fact, destined for the Jewish Diaspora. His translation has come down to us in bits and pieces.

143) See www.sacredbible.org for the Catholic Public Domain Version.

words), and the use of the Masoretic nikkud system to indicate vowels and suchlike has caused a great deal of potential meaning to be lost. There have also been omissions in the text, often just one letter that changes the meaning of the sentence. And thus we may assume that the Jews have, whenever possible, somewhat hidden from view our Lord and Saviour. An indication of it exists in the following verses (Lk 24:44-47):

> «« Jesus Christ said unto them: *"These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning Me."* Then opened He their understanding that they might understand the Scriptures. And said unto them: *"Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations."* »»

The remarkable thing about this passage is that what *"was written"* cannot be found back in the Old Testament. That means that the manuscripts of the Old Testament from Jesus' time must have differed from the later copies that have served for our Bible translations. As already said, the Qumran scrolls are revealing in that respect. The famous Isaiah scroll from Qumran is clear enough.[144)] But there is still another way out, a special one. If we look at the first verse of 1 Chronicles, it starts with a number of names: *"Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Jared, Enoch, Mehuselah, Lamech, Noah."* If translated as if a normal text from Hebrew, as if there were no names, we get: *"Man (is) appointed mortal sorrow; (but) the blessed God shall come down to teach (that) His death shall bring rest to (the) desperate."* Here is a summary of God's plan of redemption, deeply hidden in the genealogical list of the book Chronicles. And no doubt similar examples exist elsewhere.

In general the divisions applied to the text are a good thing since it prevents a wildly conjectural intrepretation, something that from time immemorial was excluded in Judaism because too free an interpretation of the Scriptures was prevented by the authorities, and still is. Jewish scriptural scholars supported the 16th-century reformers in their efforts to translate the Bible from Hebrew. A delegation of rabbis, in Geneva strongly advised them to respect the divisions that had been made by the Jews in the text as also the punctuation that was applied to the Bible version of the middle of the 10th century, otherwise the consequences would be disastrous, so the argument went. Wisely they kept to the advice.

A side note is in order. The modern practice with new Bible translations of bringing out variants that have long been rejected and presenting them as scientific is a very questionable one and throws up a smokescreen for those who have not studied the matter. To avoid falling prey to that, I prefer the older translations: the King James or New King James edition (NKJV), the Dutch Staten Translation, and Abbé Crampon's excellent French edition (first editions in the early 20th century).

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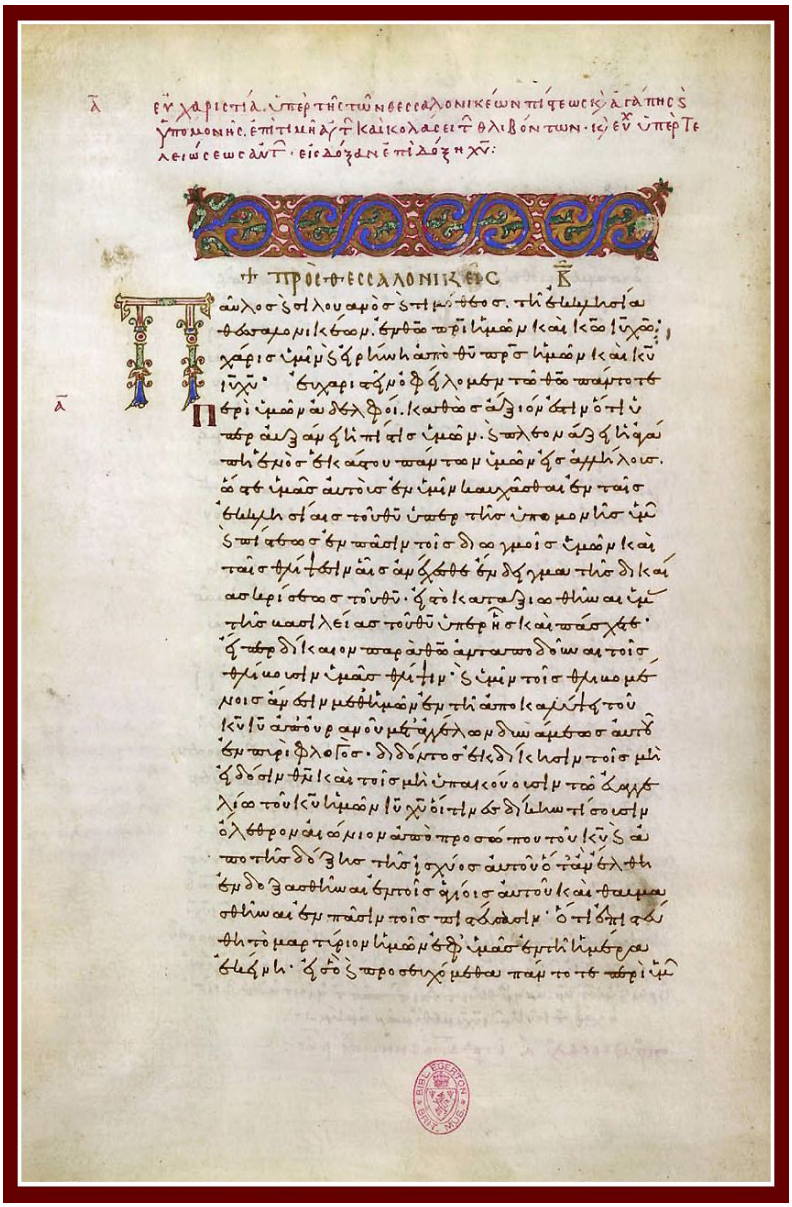
144) "Isaiah's Exalted Servant in the Great Isaiah Scroll" by Steven P. Lancaster and James M. Monson – Messiah Journal, a teaching journal by First Fruits of Zion, Rockford Illinois # spring 2011/5771 (Special Supplement, issue 107).



Their source text is among the standard works for New Testament translators. A good Bible translation, such as the NKJV, always presents the alternative in a footnote. Someone who wants to deviate from the Westcott & Hort source text must have good arguments, but most of the time those arguments have little merit. Thanks to Westcott & Hort, we now have a text that deviates narrowly from the original. God watches over his Word. This proves once again.. And He owes it to Himself to do so. Finally it can be said that the Bible is, from cover to cover, true, justified, authentic and infallible.

The Panin Bible Statistics (PBS)

2.35 – The discovery of the PBS by Panin

Ivan Nikolayevitsh Panin (1855-1942) discovered that the statistical phenomena in the Canons of the Old and the New Testament are based on a design impossible to create by human hands. He was born in Russia. Having participated in plots against the Czar at an early age, he was exiled. After spending some years in study in Germany, he came to the United States and entered Harvard University. After graduation in 1882, he converted from agnosticism to Christianity. In 1890 he discovered some of the phenomenal mathematical designs underlying both the Greek text of the New Testament and the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. He was to devote over fifty years of his life painstakingly, and exhausting his health, exploring the numerical structure of Scripture, generating over 43,000 detailed hand-penned pages of analysis. A sampling of his discoveries was published, and is still being published today. Panin used the Greek edition of Westcott and Hort of the New Testament as the basis for his research, but made use in particular of the alternative readings that those authors suggested.

Bible Numerics starts by replacing letters with numbers, which manipulation is made possible because in Greek (as well as in Hebrew) each letter represents a numerical value. The next step is to apply statistical analysis to these numbers, with a disregard for the meaning of the words from which these numbers are derived. If a set of numbers in a row thus obtained are highly correlated, this points to design, because it ought not to happen.

Because of the amazing design that appears to dominate all the texts, it is possible to determine which of the doubtful translations are correct and which passages, suspected or rejected on the basis of other textual criticism, form part of the original manuscript. As Panin once noted: *"I would gladly - at least the spirit is willing, however weak the flesh - have one of my fingers cut off rather than permit a single word to be forever cut from the Authentic Original."* Below is one of his studies, taken from "The New Testament from the Greek text as established by Bible Numerics", printed at the prestigious Oxford University Press in 1973.

2.36 – An illustration of the methodology - the ancestral question

As an improtan illustration of the PBS let us consider the question of whether the Jechoniah of Matthew's list of the descendance of Jesus is the son of Josiah, the Jechoniachi**m** of the Old Testament, or his grandson, Jechoniachi**n**, who happens to be of Jechoniachi**m**. Actually, Matthew's is the genealogical list of Jesus' foster father Joseph. The PBS settles by means of the statistics in favour of Jechoniachi**m**. This is an important question. Jechoniachi**m**, son of Josiah, was one of the last kings before the Babylonian captivity. He was the brother of Zedekiah, the last in line of the reigning Davidic dynasty, who was left to rot away in prison. In Jeremiah 22 we read that Jechoniachi**n** (with an «n», not an «m») was proscribed. God refuses to grant him an heir to the throne of David. Even though he might have sons, the prophecy held that his descendants would never sit upon a throne. Hundreds of years later the curse on Jechoniachi**n** still remained in force. The question is whose blood Joseph had in his veins, of which we cannot be sure on the basis of Mathhew's list alone. The Davidic list of succession to the throne is quite complicated near its end. Here follows the list, in which dynastic year 1 is the year following the coronation. Of course, all years are BC (before Christ):

king 01	(1031 - 992)	David.
king 15	(697 - 669)	Hezekiah son of Ahaz (year 692: Assyrian Captivity; year 684: miracle of the Ahaz Sundial).
king 16	(- 614)	Manasseh son of Hezekiah (at his ascession to the throne he was 12 years old).
king 17	(- 612)	Amon son of Manasseh.
king 18	(- 581)	Josiah son of Amon (year 594: fearful-awful days)
king 19	3 months	Jehoahaz born as Shallum - youngest and fourth son of Josiah.
king 20	(580 - 570)	Jechoniachi**m** born as Eliachim - second son of Josiah.
king 21	3 months	Jechoniachi**n** born as Jechoniah (also called Choniah), son of Jechoniachi**m**.
king 22	(569 - 559)	Zedekiah born as Mattaniah - third son of Josiah, the last king of Judah.
	year 559	Start of Babylonian Captivity, which ended 70 years later.

Jechonia or Chonia, was the son of Eliachim (later known as Jechoniachi**m)**. He adopted the throne name Jechoniachi**n**, and he reigned for only three months. The Babylonian king

then made his uncle Mattaniah king, who adopted the throne name Zedekiah. Apart from a scheme of twice 3 months + 11 years, we notice that the Davidic dynasty over Judah ended with three brothers reigning in succession, as happened with the French House of Bourbon, the House of Valois that preceded it, and likewise the dynasty before the Valois. In these houses is to be found the royal Davidic blood. Professor Arthur J. Zuckerman has conducted a joint study with other historians regarding that question, published in "A Jewish Princedom in Feudal France" (1972).

It is remarkable that in the earliest Christian traditions Mary's father is called Joachim, derived of course from Jechoniachim, who is not a father but forefather. In reality her father was Heli. I rather follow the Christian tradition instead of the Talmudic, mentioning *"Jechoniachi**n** the cursed"* from whom Jesus' would have descended, a tradition less trustworthy because the Jews in later centuries had a vested interest in discrediting the descendance of Joseph from which – in their eyes – Jesus came.

We Christians know about the virgin birth of the Messiah. But this was not known during his public life and it was certainly not known by the priests who arranged the marriage between Joseph and Mary. Considering that Joseph descended from the required line of kings, the priests could not have disqualified Jesus as the Messiah on the mere ground that Joseph was not a suitable father. In the Gospels this accusation is nowhere to be found. For the expected Messiah of Israel, Joseph happened to be both a suitable adoptive father and a suitable natural father. This gives added weight to the assumption that Joseph descended from Joachim and it explains why Mary's father is called Joachim, while it was Heli.

Both Jesus' parents have the same grandmother, named Phanuel of the tribe of Asher, a woman of great renown. She married twice, first to Mattan, the grandfather of Joseph, and next to Levi, the great-grandfather of Mary. Levi begot Mattat whose son was Heli. The Jerusalem Talmud recognises that Luke's genealogy is that of Mary and not of Joseph. The beginning of his list can be easily read with the following addition – in between brackets: *"Jesus, as was supposed, the son of Joseph (but in reality the son of Mary) son of Heli, etc."* The same Talmud confirms that Mary is a daughter of Heli (Hagigah 2:4), whereas the father of Joseph was Jacob, son of Mattan. So it is the couple "Phanuel x Mattan" who begets Jacob, who begets Joseph, and it is the couple "Phanuel x Levi" (Phanuel's second marriage), who begets Mattat, who begets Heli, who begets Mary. Mary's ancestor is Nathan, king Solomon's brother. She also came from David but not via Jechoniachim in line of blood, which illustrates that in both instances Jesus descends from the required line for kings.

The proof given by Panin follows from the list below. Of the persons 'begotten' in this genealogy, Isaac is the first and the Lord Jesus the last. Of the birth years of the links from the first to the last only the following can be obtained for which the Bible gives chronological details. In view of the fact that information relating to the birth dates of the other links are unavailable, Panin only used this list.

1	Isaac was born in Anno Mundi	2108	counted after Adam
2	Jacob	2168	
3	David	2944	
4	Rehoboam	3013	
5	Jehoshaphat	3080	
6	Jehoram	3108	
7	Uzziah	3208	
8	Jotham	3251	
9	Ahaz	3272	
10	Hizkiah	3283	
11	Manasseh	3325	
12	Amon	3370	
13	Josiah	3386	
14	JechoniachiM	3400	
15	Our Lord Jesus	3999	
		46,915	

The sum total of these dates - 46,915 - consists of 4,265 ELEVENS; the close neighbour of the total - 46,914 - or 7 x 2 x 3 x 1,117 produces a SEVEN; its other close neighbour - 46,916 - or 37 x 2 x 2 x 317 produces THIRTY-SEVEN. Accordingly three distinct schemes of seven, eleven and thirty-seven run through these fifteen dates; which would require twelve pages or so to expound here. For the immediate purpose of this paper the very first number alone suffices to establish design, thus:

46,915 is	(7 x 6 x 1,117) + 1	or (37 x 2 x 2 x 317) - 1	or 11 x 5 x 853
2,108 is	(7 x 7 x 43) + 1	or (37 x 3 x 19) - 1	or (43 x 7 x 7) + 1; and others:
44,807 is	7 x 37 x 173	or 37 x 7 x 173	or (43 x 2 x 521) + 1.

Here the SEVENS (with 7 x 7) appear, and the 37, but in addition a FORTY-THREE appears (with the sum of the figures of the factors 43, 7, 7, being 21, or 3 sevens, and similarly 37, 7, 173, being 28, or 4 sevens). But in addition to the SEVENS and THIRTY-SEVENS: (1) the ELEVEN reappears in the sum of the digits of 2,108; and (2) a 43 reappears in the neighbour of both figures 2,108 and 44,807.

The chance of this collocation being made possible by one item alone out of the fifteen is one in 7 x 7 x 7 x 7 x 7 x 11 x11 x 11 x 37 x 37 x 43 x 43 x1,117 x 1,117, or 16,807 x 1,331 x 1,369 x 1,849 x 130,689, a figure consisting of 19 digits.

The year 3,108 produces a similar partition, as follows:

46,915	is (7 x 2 x 3 x 1,117) + 1	of (37 x 4 x 317) - 1
3,108	is 7 x 2 x 2 x 3 x 37	of 37 x 4 x 3 x 7
43,807	is 7 x 7 x 2 x 3 x 149	of 37 x 37 x 4 x 4 x 2.

This partition is achieved by 7 x 6 (with 7 x 7) and by 37 x 4 (with 37 x 37 x 4 x 4). The chance of this collocation is one in 7 x 7 x 7 x 6 x 6 x 37 x 37 x 37 x 4 x 4 x 4 x 2 or 343 x 36 x 50, or 653 x 128 or 78,200,000,000.

As Jechoniach**in**'s year of birth is 18 years later than Jechoniach**im**'s, in Anno Mundi 3418, these extensive schemes of sevens and thirty-sevens are destroyed by the changing of 3,400 into 3,418.

> • Incidentally this scheme alone demonstrates that in the elaboration of the Biblical chronology EVERY DATE is CORRECTLY calculated as from Adam. Needless to say, when a continuous Biblical chronology was established by numerical manipulation, its discoverer knew nothing about its bearing on the JechoniachiM, -chiN question.

2.37 – Why the PBS did not get the credit it deserves

The Panin Bible Statistics (PBS) have until now been largely ignored by the theological establishment because of the haphazard way that the New Testament came into being and was transmitted from one generation to the other (in the earliest time). From this point of view a letter-perfect design that would permeate all the texts seems preposterous. Therefore the matter was never taken seriously in spite of the mathematical formulae that speak for themselves. Those 'formulae' have not found a listening ear because, generally speaking, Christian theologians have not much affinity with mathematics; Jewish theologians are of a different breed. I wonder how many Christian theologians have ever experienced the excitement of a newly discovered mathematical formula, to be compared with the excitement of a connoisseur who tastes some exquisite wine.

IvanPanin, by Aronson (1916)

Panin's mathematical validation of PBS, with a view to estimating the probability of random distribution, was done when the practical mathematisation of huge numbers was not yet within reach, because computers did not exist. Panin tested PBS with Greek works of secular writers but failed to find any significant relation. His comparisons and calculations remained tentative, for his approach did not and could not use the mathematical tools essential for randomisation of the object of study. This also explains why no one from the scientific establishment endeavoured to criticise his work when first published, because a rigorous criticism demands the same tools. For sure, the PBS phenomenon is of such a high level of sophistication that, even with the help of computers, it needs a genius to invent a neatly readable plain text with the required underlying statistical framework. I am confident that an improved and disciplined validation and sensitivity analysis, by a mathematical expert using the tools and statistical standards of today, will still show exceptionally low levels of significance, even if higher than those of Panin, who commonly calculated significance levels of far less than one in a billion, while even one in a thousand would be acceptable to allow for design.

2.38 – The original as it has always existed in the Mind of God

Because the early Christians did not use a copying system even remotely similar to that of the Jewish scribes that could secure a faithful multiplication of the Holy Scripture in minute detail, the common versions in Greek that circulated in the 19th century should have counted thousands of letter variations as compared to the authentic text. Logically those common versions should contain more than 14,000 letter variations, or 2%, from the

IVAN PANIN was born in Russia in 1855. A firm agnostic and nihilist, he was exiled for participating in plots against his government, emigrated to Germany, and eventually to the United States. Here he graduated from Harvard as a Master of Literary Criticism, delivering outstanding lectures at premium venues. His conversion to Christianity in the late 1880's was an event that produced no small public stir, as his agnostic position was well-known and had been considered unassailable.

In 1890, his attention was caught by the prologue of the Gospel of John, in which the article is used before God in one instance, then left out in the next: *"...and the Word was with 'the' God, and the Word was God"*. His keen literary and mathematical mind was aroused, and he began to examine the text to see if there was an underlying pattern contributing to what arrested his trained eye. Making parallel lists of verses with and without the article, he discovered striking mathematical relationships. Undaunted by the enormity of the task, he progressively unearthed a treasury of numeric relationships. Until his death in 1942 Panin labored continuously, discovering complex numerical patterns throughout the Greek New Testament – often to the detriment of his health. The overwhelming conclusion drawn from his studies is simple: *"Were this done intentionally by man, it would have demanded the collaboration of all writers of the Bible – and the condition that all of them be mathematicians of the highest order."* Ivan Panin spent fifty years of his life documenting in detail the numerical designs in the Bible, handwriting 40,000 pages of his computations.

authentic text that, at a quick guess, totals 700,000 letters (the number of Greek words of the New Testament is 138,000). This would, of course, yield far fewer word variations and even fewer sentence variations. Actually, the number of contested renderings of the Holy Writ consisted of 3,000 readings, which have been tested by means of the PBS. It should be noted that the kind of discrepancies are in most cases inconsequential for an appropriate interpretation of the text. Undoubtedly Westcott & Hort's revision of the original Greek of the New Testament has restored a great deal of the autographs, but it would be a true miracle if they had managed to restore the 'original' Versions in letter-perfect detail. Such a miracle would of course be possible, but it is not necessarily the only way out. God may have chosen to work with our human frailties over the span of many centuries in such a way that would finally lead to the letter-perfect script as it existed in the Mind of God. This perfect script in God's Mind could differ in letter-detail from the original autographs in the beginning of our Christian era. Whatever the case, the kind of mathematical analysis as performed by Panin requires a nearly perfect text, because one digit change alone destroys the statistical framework of a whole section and if the corruption of the text grows larger, a point is very soon reached where a reconstruction of the original text surpasses our human genius. Panin has demonstrated that the variations from

the original as it exists in the Mind of God were reduced by Westcott & Hort to some wrong spellings and to 13 double-bracketed passages that were stamped by them as "Interpolations" (of a total of 15). I can readily accept that Westcott & Hort managed to weed out all the intentional corruptions, like the so-called Johannine Comma of 1 John 5:7-8, but to fully appreciate their work we should also consider the unintentional corruptions.

From the preface of Peter James' "Centuries of Darkness" (1991)

A superbly fashioned hand-axe or a solid gold Egyptian funerary mask may work as a picturesque museum-piece, but by itself can actually tell us very little about the past. Unless we know more exactly where it was discovered at an archæological site and what it was found with - it will remain a curio without a context. Date, of course, is a crucial aspect of context. One of the first things anyone wants to know about an ancient find is simply: how old is it? Despite this, dates in archæology and history seem to have acquired a bad name, perhaps not surprisingly, given the generations of school children forced to digest tedious lists of events with no apparent logic in their order other than their chronological sequence. Trainee archæologists and ancient historians, too, have to learn basic sets of dates and, having absorbed the information, put it to the back of their minds. From then on it can be taken for granted, and chronology, for those eager to press on with the deeper study of ancient societies, is all too often treated as a necessary evil. Unfortunately there are also some scholars who, like poor history teachers, become totally preoccupied with the minutiæ of dating and miss the point of the exercise. These prompted the great Sir Mortimer Wheeler to write: *"We have (...) been preparing time-tables; let us now have some trains."* The problem with Wheeler's impatient demand is that timetables in themselves are not enough; they have to be accurate before the trains can start running, otherwise you'll miss the connections between them. In archæological terms, the cultural interactions of the ancient world remain a complete jumble unless we have a reliable time-scale.

Of course, Westcott & Hort did not pretend to have produced a letter-perfect sample of the original as it exists in the Mind of God, although the ideal was ever present in their minds. That they have accomplished this remarkable feat of an almost faultless text is because of factors beyond their control: the phenomenal mathematical design underlying the texts throughout the whole Bible was only to be discovered by Ivan Panin in 1890, nine years after Westcott & Hort had completed their task. In 1934 Panin, then 79 years old, published the Greek text of the New Testament determined by his method to be the same, letter by letter, as the original as it has always existed in the Mind of God. His method conclusively proves that all the manuscripts had the same divine author, but does not prove that the men who were writing the first manuscripts or translating them from some Hebrew original, or inadvertently modifying them at some later stage in the way intended by God, were aware of the fact that every word, yes every letter, was divinely inspired and was to be inscribed in one of the great works of creation of God the Almighty.

2.39 – A correction to the Panin Bible Chronology

Panin's chronology places Jesus' birth in 3,999 AM (Anno Mundi: years as from Adam), which is based on the Daniel 9:24-25: *"From the going forth of the decree to restore*

Jerusalem unto an anointed one, a prince, shall be 483 years." The decree by King Cyrus was in the year 3517 AM (the first of the 483 years) as had been established by the Panin chronology, which immediately follows the end of the Babylonian exile, in the year 3,516. The year of the decree is mentioned in Ezra 1:1-3: *"And in year 1 of Cyrus (...), he made a proclamation (...) that the Lord charged him to build Him a house in Jerusalem."*

The Blessed Augustinian Anna-Katarina Emmerick, however, 'saw' that Jesus was born at the 'end' of 3,997 AM (not 3,999 AM), which advance ought to have been in response to the prayers of the Virgin Mary. The year 3,999 AM was thus planned in the Mind of God, and 3,997 AM its advance. We find a remarkable confirmation of this conclusion in Maria Valtorta's "Il poema dell'Uomo-Dio" in which she relates the Temple incident when the infant Jesus, because of his knowledge, astonished the scholars (Luke 2:41-49):

> «« Jesus was then twelve years old. Gamaliel and Hillel, already old men, were both present, the first one explaining that the Messiah must have been born already because **since almost ten years the announced period of Daniel's seventy week-years prophecy had elapsed**. Jesus says: *"The prophecy, cannot be mistaken in its declaration of time, (...) and so, when that time was accomplished, the period was also accomplished of the 'sixty two plus one' weeks (69 x 7 = 483) since the Temple proclamation."* »»

If we substract the ten years from Jesus' age we arrive at the period when Jesus was two years old, which accords with our calculation of the advance of the birth of Jesus due to Mary's ardent prayers!

According to the Gregorian calendar, Jesus was born in 8 BC. (See my article "Proofs of the Life and Death of Jesus".) In the Anno Mundi calendar this equals the year 3,997. To synchronise the Anno Mundi calendar with the Gregorian, Panin assumes 4 BC for the date of Jesus' birth. In his eyes this is identical to 3,999 AM, and therefore two years should be deducted for every one of Panin's years. If, as an example, the Panin chronology gives the year 1,466 BC for the start of the Exodus, this must be corrected to 1,468 BC. Calculated backwards from now, i.e. from the year of our Lord 2008, this equals 2,008 + 1,468 – 1 = 3,475 years 3,475 years ago; that is three-and-a-half millennia ago. The 'minus 1' is required because there is no year zero in the Gregorian calendar.

The authentic Mark 6:52-53 is not the letter-perfect script as in the Mind of God:

An example of the principle that the first Script did not necessarily be letter perfect in the mind of God, is given by fragment 7Q5 ≈ Mark 6:52-53, found at Qumran. The fragment indicates that the Greek word 'diapersantes' (having crossed over) was written with a tau instead of a delta, and also that the words 'epi tên gên' (to the land) were missing, while Panin's numerical analysis shows that diapersantes should be with a delta and that the three missing words, that evidently were missing in the original, should be included. This divergence becomes understandable if we place the writing down of these words in that particular period (ante 68 AD) and in that particular place (Jerusalem). For more details see Carsten Thiede: "7Q5 – Facts or Fiction?" - The Westminster Theological Journal 57 # 1995 (pp. 471-74).

APPENDIX 16

How long did the Israelites stay in Egypt?

It is considered a fait accompli that Christ was born in 4 or 3 BC. Based on a schematic division of history that would have happened in the year 4,000 AM (Anno Mundi: as from Adam). However, He was born in 8 BC, which, to be precise, occurred in the year 3,977 AM, as is explained in the previous article. Assuming that Christ was born around 4 BC we have to come to the conclusion that the Evangelist Luke used a white lie, because there was no census then in that part of the Roman Empire. Because the Prophet Micah had predicted that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, there had to be a reason why the Holy Family stayed in Bethlehem at the time when Christ was born, and that would explain why Luke contrived the census – and 'en passant' the visit of the three kings; but as a matter of fact, so they fantasize, the child was quite normally born in Nazareth. The incorrectly named 'Luke Legend' goes as follows:

> «« And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that a census should be taken over the whole world. (…) And all went to be registered, every one into his own city. And because Joseph was of the house and lineage of David, he also went up (…) unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, and together with Mary he went to be registered (with the Roman authorities). (…) And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered, and she brought forth her firstborn son. »»

You see, this is the way our theologians and historians destroy the faith of the unsuspecting public. I made perfectly clear in "When was Christ Born" (in Proofs of the Life and Death of Jesus) that Christ was born at the time of the census, which occurred, as is common knowledge, in the year 8 BC. As a result some other important dates also shifted, but for each shift a satisfactory answer has been found. After a thorough analysis, the study shows that it was Flavius Josephus who invented a white lie, and not the evangelist Luke. That of all people Flavius Josephus falsified history is unthinkable to our highly qualified scientists! Don't touch at the reputation of Flavius Josephus! But yet that's the only way out.

From the foregoing, the importance of the chronology of events impresses itself. As Peter James noticed, chronology is too often regarded as an unavoidable evil by people specialised in ancient civilizations, having been bored by the tedious repetition of dates at school. But they are important, very much so: a shift of a mere four years in the date of birth of Jesus Christ casts serious doubts on the historicity of the Biblical account. Historicity is the historical actuality of persons and events, meaning the quality of being part of real history as opposed to being some myth, legend, or pure fiction. Historicity focuses on the true value of knowledge claims about the past – denoting historical actuality, authenticity, and factuality. The historicity of a claim about the past is its factual status and credibility. A chronology is in itself inadequate; it has to be accurate to arrive at a sequence

of events in relation to the other events that happen simultaneously. In archæological terms, the cultural and political interactions of the ancient world remain a complete jumble unless we have a reliable time-scale. Consequently, it is not just an object of curiosity to get to know the exact time frame of the Egyptian Exile, which only would interest a number of antiquated armchair scholars.

It might come as a surprise, but in terms of a continuous Bible chronology this question is of the utmost importance. Christ's year of birth happens to be the pivotal point between the old and the new chronology. Genesis 5:3 tells that Adam was 130 years old when Seth was born; this happened in 130 AM. This way of the counting of dates continues until we finally arrive at Jesus' birth in the year 3,999 AM, which due to the prayers of the Most Holy Virgin was advanced by two years. Therefore, the year 3,997 before Christ was the beginning of Adam, which in our Gregorian calendar accords with 4005 BC, knowing that Christ was born in 8 BC. The Anno Mundi counting until Jesus' birth has many hurdles, that without exception have been perfectly solved by Ivan Panin. He departed from the principle that the Bible in itself contains all the chrononogical answers and that there is no need to use the profane literature. The counting of years is not an easy task, as appears from the Jewish calendar. Their calendar counted for our year 2,000 AD, the year 5,760 AM, while in reality it should have been 6,004 AM. This represents a miscalculation of 244 years. I never looked into the issue why they missed the mark by 244 years, because the numerical pattern of the PBS (Panin Bible Statistics) provides indisputable proof of the correctness of Panin's chronology.

In the continuous Bible chronology, the duration of the Egyptian Exile is an important point. Was it 210 years, 240, 400 or 430 years? It is not just about 4 years difference, as with Jesus' birth, but the difference can add up to 220 years (430-210). The PBS indicates that the Egyptian Exile ended in the 15th century BC, to be precise in 1,468 before Christ (cf. Panin + 2). The so-called 400 years Exile is presented in Genesis 15:12-14:

> «« And when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram. And, lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him. And the Lord said unto Abram: *"Know of a surety that your descendants shall be 'strangers' in a land that is not theirs, and they shall be slaves; and they will be afflicted for 400 years. But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and they shall leave with many possessions."* »»

A complicating factor is Exodus 12:40-41: *"Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was 430 years. And it came to pass that the people of God left Egypt on the selfsame day, 430 years after they had arrived."* Based on the New Testament letter to the Galatians (quoted in the next section), Panin chooses this number to arrive at the time of the Exile. He does not discuss Genesis 15:12-14, mentioning 400 years. I venture to discuss these 400 years, an unsolved problem hitherto; usually one chooses the one or the other, 400 or 430 years, without discussing the other. What now follows explains the meaning of those 400 years in relation to the 430 years.

The 430 years stated, fits the era of ADT (Anno Domus Testamenti), or the number of years after the large dome covenant with Abraham. Psalm 105:8-10 reveals: *"He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations: the covenant He made with Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac, and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant."* The 430 years of Galatians 3:17 are described as follows: *"The Law (the Ten Commandments), which came to be 430 years later, cannot annul the arrangement that was confirmed before by God that it should make the promise (of the large dome covenant) of no effect."* The correct reading of Exodus 12:40-41 is thus as follows, freely translated: *"They sojourned in Egypt until the year 430. On precisely New Year's Eve the people went out of Egypt (and that day is commemorated at the Jewish Pesach/Eastern)."* As it is likely that the day of the large dome covenant came to serve as the head of the year, based on this verse we may assume that the large dome covenant was made at Eastern! Now it happens that on several occasions God made promises to Abram. The first time when he was 75 years old, but only the last and third time did it become the 'everlasting' covenant. (Gen. 12 and 17) He was then 99 years old and only then was his name changed from Abram to Abraham (father of many peoples); only then was the Covenant sealed with blood by means of circumcision, providing it with the force of law (without the shedding of blood no sealing), and only then Sarah conceived the promised son, to be named Isaac, who was born when Abraham was still 99 years old.

The 400 years of being a stranger, foreseen in Abram's horrible dream, are not necessarily contradictory to the foregoing as they refer to the time of the covenant with Abimelech (Gen. 21:22-34), that therefore took place in the year 30 ADT (430-400). That announces the beginning of a discrimination and oppression that runs forth all the way until the end of the Egyptian oppression. The flow of the narrative leaves little choice as to the reason of the covenant with Abimelech. After having concluded the covenant it states that Abraham *"sojourned"* (גּוּר) in the land of the Philistines (21:34). In Hebrew this kind of 'sojourning' is derived from the word for 'alien' or 'stranger', and indeed the family of Abraham was oppressed by the Philistines – not however by the Hethites (Gen. 23:6) – even after they had lived already for 55 years in the land of Canaan (Gen. 12:4). Canaan was also the land where Isaac was born, his homeland, but yet Isaac was commanded to *"sojourn"* in the land (26:3); Jacob *"sojourned"* in exile in the land of Cham – another name for Egypt (Ps. 105:23) – while his sons said that they had come to Egypt to "sojourn" there (47:4). The first 30 years ADT, in Canaan, do not count, for in this period of time the nature of Abraham's stay still differed. Though an expatriate, he was held in the highest esteem (because of his military operations). The incident with Abimelech shows that the esteem had started to fade away. Remember, Abraham lived much longer than the Philistines. The old clan, who had respected him, was too old or had died already, Abraham having reached 130 years of age when he made the covenant with Abimelech, with another 45 years in store.

To be able to understand the following it easier to open your Bible. The *"at that time"* of Genesis 21:22 is unspecified in Hebrew and can be seen separately from the preceding

verses, which deals among other things with Isaac's weaning, nine months after the large dome covenant was made (ADT zero). Therefore the translation *"at the same time"* is misleading. I prefer to read it as follows: *"At that time (we are discussing – the time of the conflict that led to the covenant with the Abimelech of Gerar) – it happened that the Abimelech and his Pichol said to Abraham: etc."* Remarkably, the first verse of the next chapter, which deals with the Akeda Isaac (Isaac's Sacrifice or his binding), denotes through the word *"acher"* a close connection with the preceding though not immediately in time, for then it would have been 'acheroj'. Actually, a six years' interval lies in between. I count six because, according to the Book Jasher, Sarah died a few days after the Akeda/binding. The Bible informs us when she died (see Gen. 17:17 together with Gen. 23:1). Abraham was then 136 years old and Isaac 36. Genesis 21:22 and 23:1 belong to those instances where the division into chapters is bound to lead to erroneous views. Genesis 22:19 should have been the beginning of chapter 23, while 21:22 should have been the beginning of chapter 22.

In the end it appears that the sojourn in Egypt lasted only 240 years. As a simple chronology shows, Jacob was born from Isaac when his father was 60 years old and at the time when Isaac's father Abraham was 159 years, which therefore happened in 60 ADT. The Bible also tells that Jacob was 130 years old at the beginning of the Egyptian Exile, which brings us to 190 ADT (60+130). The end of the Exile is 430 ADT. The substraction (430-190 = 240) gives the duration of the Egyptian Exile. According to Genesis 15:16 they would have returned after four generation (4x70 = 280), which here includes the 40 years Exodus. In being a stranger there were two exiles: a simple one of 160 years (a diaspora: away from home and yet at home), and the Egyptian one of 240 years, together 400. Only at the end of the Exodus the Promised Land had become their real homeland.

We may wonder why things are often so complicated in the Bible. First, because real life is full of unexpected twists and turns. And second, because God always gives a choice. Those who want to insist in nót believing in God and his book will always find a reason not to believe, and those who believe wholeheartedly in God and the Bible will, after some searching, always find a reason to substantiate their faith. Nevertheless, those who persist in their idiotic unbelief have no excuse when standing before the Throne of God, because there is sufficient evidence to believe. Not wanting to hear, they did not hear.

Note: An interesting observation is that in Jewish tradition it was known that the Egyptian Exile lasted much less than 400 or 430 years. The Ancient Book Jasher 81:3 states: "And the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in the land of Egypt in hard labor, was 210 years." And those 210 years are still the accepted duration within the Jewish body. The fact remains that in the traditional explanation the two periods of 400 and 430 years cannot be reconciled, though many efforts have been made to do so.